SOHRAB AND RUSTUM
AND
BALDER DEAD

BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD

WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, ETC., BY

EGERTON SMITH, M.A.

DACCA COLLEGE

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA
1913

PREFACE

Sohrab and Rustum and *Balder Dead* are usually read at an age when students may be expected to study not merely the substance of a poem but also its form, including both structure and style, and its imaginative colouring. Considérable attention has therefore been bestowed in the introduction and notes upon the literary characteristics of the two poems, and an attempt has been made to encourage their study in the light of general literary principles.

With regard to *Balder Dead* it has seemed better to give in the introduction a short conspectus of Scandinavian mythology than to leave for the notes scattered explanations of the many allusions as they occur.

With a view to the requirements of Indian students some information has been given which the English student would know, or could find out for himself. Much of this has, however, been set apart in a Glossary.

I have to acknowledge the use made in some half-dozen notes of Professor G. C. Macaulay's edition of *Balder Dead* (Macmillan and Co.).

July 1913. DACCA COLLEGE.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AN EPISODE

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	ix
§ 1. Types of Epic Poetry	ix
§ 2. Epic Qualities of *Sohrab and Rustum*	xii
§ 3. The Story of Sohrab and Rustum	xvi
§ 4. Arnold's Treatment of the Story	xviii
§ 5. Other Versions of the Story	xx
§ 6. Arnold's Literary Principles	xxi
§ 7. General Characteristics of Style	xxvii
§ 8. Structure of the Plot	xxviii
§ 9. The Similes	xxx
§ 10. Repetitions and Archaisms	xxxv
§ 11. The Metre	xxxv
ANALYSIS OF THE POEM	4
SOHRAB AND RUSTUM	5
NOTES	31
GLOSSARY	46
INDEX OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES	48
INDEX OF NAMES OF PERSONS	50
INDEX OF TRIBAL NAMES	51
MAP	53

INTRODUCTION

§I.—TYPES OF EPIC POETRY.

POETRY may roughly be divided into two kinds: (*a*) Subjective poetry—in which the poet expresses his own feelings and thoughts, *e.g.*, Lyric poetry. (*b*) Objective poetry in which the poet represents things that exist, or events that happen, outside himself. Descriptive poetry tries to represent in words the perceptible qualities of natural objects. Narrative poetry finds its material in external events; it relates actions.

The most important form of narrative poetry is the Epic. Epic is the name given to that "species of poetic .. composition, represented typically by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which celebrates in the form of a continuous narrative the achievements of one or more heroic personages of history or tradition". (*New English Dictionary*.) Its name, derived from the Greek *Epos*, 'a word,' indicates that it is to be distinguished from Lyric as something said or told and not sung.

There are two distinct types of epic—(1) the primitive epic, or epic of growth, and (2) the imitative or artificial epic.

Amongst the earliest forms of poetry were rough hymns in praise of tribal gods or heroes, sung by the clan in chorus to the accompaniment of a simple dance.[1] These would be gradually supplemented and finally almost

[1] Probably similar in structure to the Vedic hymns, though doubtless more crude. The Rig-Veda illustrates the gradual growth of the narrative element; for instance, 'when Indra is extolled or invoked, a reference is not infrequently made to the achievements of the God, his wrestling with the thunder-storm, or some similar deed'.—Jireczek, *Deutsche Heldensage*, trans. Bentinck Smith. (Dent & Co.)

displaced by recitals of the deeds of the heroes ; first by mere allusion, later by actual narration of their exploits. The songs became legendary rather than hymnic ; the narrative element increased while the choral or lyric element decreased.

As writing was not yet invented these lays would be memorised and handed on by one professional minstrel to another. Many would gather about the figure of some great national hero, including some that were not originally connected with him. The legendary material thus provided and preserved by oral tradition would be worked up into a complex narrative whole and given a definite structural unity by some great bard. 'Detached lays of an episodic character mark the first step'. 'It would be the work of minstrels, priests, and poets, as the national spirit grew conscious of itself to shape all these materials into a definite body of tradition. This is the rule of development—first scattered stories, then the union of these into a *national* legend'.[1]

This artistic whole might then be supplemented, modified, polished, more imaginatively coloured by one or more later bards before finally it was committed to writing in a later age.

This is the true epic, or as it may be called to distinguish it from a later development, the primitive epic or epic of growth.

Examples are the Old English epic, *Beowulf*, the German *Nibelungenlied*, the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana* (although these have much didactic interpolation). The greatest of all are the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; but it is slightly misleading to apply the term 'primitive' to these epics, which show a high artistic unity of structure, as well as a fineness in detail, that could only have been the work of a great poetic genius.

[1] Butcher & Lang, *The Odyssey of Homer*. (Macmillan & Co.)

At a later stage of civilisation when the heroic age has been succeeded by an age of scholarship and literary culture; the poet is more isolated from the people, art becomes more conscious and more intellectualised. Epics are no longer recited; they are written. And furthermore they are written deliberately in imitation of the primitive epic in their more external aspects—in material, structure, and style. But they are no longer national in the same way, they are artificial revivals of a past age. They are composed according to a conscious scheme and often aim at the exposition of some central idea. The motive of Virgil's *Aeneid* is the greatness of Rome and its destinies; the avowed aim of *Paradise Lost* is to

> assert eternal Providence
> And justify the ways of God to men.

These are literary or imitative epics.

'The literary epic naturally resembles the primitive epic, on which it is ultimately based, in various fundamental characteristics. Its subject matter is of the old heroic and mythical kind; it makes free use of the supernatural; it follows the same structural plan and reproduces many traditional details of composition; while, greatly as it necessarily differs in style, it often adopts the formulas, fixed epithets, and stereotyped phrases and locutions which are among the marked features of the early type. But examination discloses, beneath all superficial likenesses, a radical dissimilarity. The heroic and legendary material is no longer living material; it is invented by the poet or disinterred by scholarly research; and it is handled with laborious care in accordance with abstract rules and principles which have become part of an accepted literary tradition'. (Hudson, *Study of Literature*.)

'The essence of the distinction . . . is this: the *primitive* epic belongs to an early period of development,

and describes heroic adventure and natural scenes, with a vivid simplicity, for love of the story; while the *literary* epic, though more or less similar in form, belongs to a later epoch of culture, is less spontaneous and more artificial, and has some great central idea which is the purpose of the tale'. (Sidgwick, *P. Vergilii Maronis Opera.*)

§2.—EPIC QUALITIES OF 'SOHRAB AND RUSTUM'.

The main characteristics of the true epic are:—

1. **Subject-matter.**—The material is not invented by individual poets, but is provided by immemorial national tradition; the events of history or legends that were in the eyes of contemporaries equivalent to history. The **personages** are the great legendary heroes of a race; they are usually representative of broad characteristic national traits, and are roughly typical of the ideals of character of their age. The greatness of these heroes is sometimes connected with the fact that they were semi-divine, or under the protection of some god. Hence a large amount of mythology is frequently found in the epic; but the supernatural is always humanised, for the minstrel had above all things to interest his hearers.

2. **Spirit.**—The epic is largely inspired by pride of race, and reflects the heroic energy of the youth of a nation. Poet and audience take delight in arms and conflict, in the elemental and virile qualities of character—courage, valour, endurance.

3. **Treatment.**—The centre of interest is in the action. The characters are always firmly drawn, and are never sketchy or vague, and never mere allegories of abstract embodiments of a chivalric idea as in the mediæval romances; yet there is little attempt at subtlety or

extreme refinement in character-painting, at pointing a moral, or at making comment of any kind.[1]

(*a*) **Construction.**—The plot must, of course, be on a large scale, but without sacrificing unity. While there must be an easily distinguishable main thread of action, much may be told in episodes, so long as these have a clear bearing on the main plot and assist in its development. The use of episodes is further justified by their enabling the poet to focus his attention on the crisis, and to commence at once with the most interesting or vital incident and then go back to narrate and explain the events that led up to this. (*See* below, §8.)

(*b*) **Style.**—Not only must the epic deal with great and momentous actions, but it must be told in a correspondingly great style, a style suited to the dignity of the events that have such an importance in the traditional history of a nation.

(i) The **Metre** must be capable of being both rapid and dignified; it must give scope for variety of movement without any suggestion of triviality.

(ii) The **Diction** too must be dignified, yet simple and straightforward, and comparatively unornamented. (*a*) Whatever decoration is admitted must not in general interfere with the simple directness of the narrative; hence the simile which normally has an important explanatory or illustrative function is usually the chief

[1] It must not be forgotten that, as Aristotle insisted, character is of great importance in epic poetry. 'Homer is the only poet who rightly understands what part in the narrative he himself should take. The poet should speak as little as possible in his own person . . . Homer, after a few prefatory words, immediately introduces a man or woman . . . each with a character of his own'. (*Poetics*, XXIV.) 'The success of epic poetry', says Professor Ker, 'depends on the author's power of imagining and representing characters. Without dramatic representation of the characters, epic is mere history or romance; the variety and life of epic are to be found in the drama that springs up at every encounter of the personages'. (*Epic and Romance*, Macmillan & Co.)

source of decoration. Similes in the primitive epic are generally very brief; a hero is 'like a lion' or 'like a wolf', a ship is blown over the sea 'most like a bird', a sword melts 'very much like ice' (*Beowulf*, 218 and 1608). Homer, however, delights to make a picture and permits himself much greater elaboration, although his similes usually have a much more subtle function than mere ornamentation, viz., to lead up to some particularly impressive scene or action.

(*b*) There is frequent repetition not only of epithets that have apparently been applied traditionally to various heroes, *e.g.*, 'Zeus the cloud-gatherer', 'the well-greaved Achæans', 'the swift-footed Achilles', 'Helen of the lovely hair'; but also of other phrases and even of sentences. This latter feature is probably due to the oral preservation of the stories; they were sung or told, never read. In order to give himself time to improvise he would repeat what had previously been said. This would also serve to fix important points in the minds of his hearers.

How far does *Sohrab and Rustum* reproduce the characteristics of the epic? It is evidently objective in method and narrative in form. It relates great actions, and actions that have an important place in the traditional history of a nation; and its chief characters are great legendary heroes. It has the epic breadth of treatment. In construction it resembles 'a single and coherent organism'; it has a distinct unity of interest and of plan and at the same time plunges at once into the dramatic part of the story. For metre it uses the English heroic measure. Its diction has much of the simple dignity of Homer; it shows many repetitions, and is decorated almost entirely by similes, many of which are in the Homeric style.

All these features it has in common with the true epic. It is certainly a heroic narrative, and, in general, is written in the epic way: but it has not the length of an epic; it

is not large in scale. Matthew Arnold said of the epic in general that 'it treats of one great complex action in a grand style, and with fulness of detail'. His poem, however, treats only of one event, and therefore is only an epic incident, or as he called it, an episode. It might also be called an epic in miniature.

Again, it is not national; the heroes are oriental, but the poet is English. The events are those of an age over two thousand years before Arnold's century. It is then a literary revival, and belongs to the artificial or imitative type of epic. Its material is taken from an epos which Arnold came to know, not by tradition, but by reading.

In his general method of treatment too Matthew Arnold is imitative; he deliberately took Homer as his model, not merely in structure, but in the details of style, especially similes; and he frequently copies even particular images and expressions. (*Cf.* notes on lines 111 and 735 for examples.) For evidence of the influence of Milton (apart from the similes and repetitions) see the notes on lines 114, 115, and 277. It is also to be noted that Arnold makes use of many words that are now obsolete or not in ordinary use in order to give an archaic appearance. For a list of these, see p. xxxv.

One further limitation must be made: Arnold's poem does not bear what Shelley called 'a defined and intelligible relation to the knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which he lived'. Save in an incidental way there is in his characters no reflection of the life and forms of thought of his own time; in the few places where modern ideas break through they are distinctly obtruded and are out of harmony with the general tone of the poem.

§3.—THE STORY OF SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

The Tartars (or Turanians) and Persians were, as usual, at war. At the time of this episode (*c.* 600 B.C.) the King of Iran (or Persia) was Kai-Kaus, who, according to Firdausi, was a foolish and luxurious tyrant. The chief command of his armies was given to a great hero, Rustum, renowned for his strength and warlike valour.

Rustum had married Tahmineh, daughter of the Turanian king of Samengan in Ader-baijan, but soon left her for the active life of war. A son was born, Sohrab, who grew up with remarkable strength and skill in arms. When he learnt of the glorious deeds of his great father Sohrab was fired with an overmastering desire to find Rustum and emulate his feats. Accordingly he set forth to war against Kai-Kaus and conquer Iran for his father. Then together they would overrun Turan as well.

Afrasiab, King of the Turanians, and therefore a natural enemy of Persia, helped him with an army and treasure, thinking that Rustum, the bulwark of Persia, might thus be destroyed by the younger hero, and that when Persia was helpless they could easily put Sohrab out of the way, and he himself would be master both of Iran and of Turan. Haman the commander of the Tartar army was instructed by Afrasiab to prevent Sohrab from discovering the identity of Rustum, and Rustum from knowing that Sohrab was his son ; [1]

> 'For this bold youth must not his father know
> Each must confront the other as his foe . . .
> Unknown the youth shall Rustum's force withstand,
> And soon o'erwhelm the bulwark of the land'.

The Turanians marched on Persia, and Sohrab defeated and took prisoner a famous warrior Hujir, and captured

[1] Rustum had been told by Tahmineh that their issue was a daughter, because she was afraid lest her son should be taken away to be trained in war.

the strong frontier fortress. The report of Sohrab's deeds was carried to the Persian king, and he in alarm sent to call Rustum to his aid. After feasting the envoys lavishly Rustum at length appeared, but when Kaus, enraged at the delay, threatened him with impalement, he taunted the king with his folly and weakness, and departed in anger. The warrior Gudurz however was sent to appease him, and a reconciliation was effected.

Rustum went to spy out the Tartar camp, and on his return described the appearance of Sohrab :

> In stature perfect, as the cypress tree,
> No Tartar ever boasted such a presence . . .
> Seeing his form, thou woulds't at once declare
> That he is Sam, the warrior ; so majestic
> In mien and action.

Sohrab challenged Kaus to single combat, but the king discreetly declined ; and Rustum at length was prevailed upon to take up the challenge, insisting however on fighting under a feigned name, 'a usage', says Malcolm, 'not uncommon in the chivalrous combats of those days'.

Rustum on the first day feeling pity for Sohrab's youth proposed that they should part in friendship, and Sohrab thinking that the noble mien of his opponent could belong to none but his glorious father asked if he were not Rustum. Rustum, however, denied this. After fighting with spear, sword, mace, bow and arrow, and wrestling, they parted for the night, the advantage being with Sohrab.

Sohrab was assured by Haman that his antagonist was not Rustum, but an instinctive feeling of affection rose in his heart, and on the second day he renewed Rustum's proposal that they should sit together in peace. Rustum refused in anger, and in the wrestling that followed was worsted, but saved his life by an appeal to the chivalry

of Sohrab, claiming the benefit of an alleged Persian custom that required the victor in a first contest to spare his antagonist for a second trial; 'a chief may fight till he is twice overthrown'.

On the third day Rustum gained the advantage in wrestling and immediately stabbed Sohrab with his dagger. When Sohrab declared that Rustum, his father, would avenge his death, the aged hero recognised his mistake, which was proved by the amulet that he had given Tahmineh to bind on the arm of any son that might be born. Consumed with remorse, Rustum flung himself on the ground and covered his head with dust.

According to Sohrab's wishes the armies departed in peace, and he was buried in Seistan with his ancestors.

Tahmineh was distracted with grief and set fire to her palace, meaning to perish in the flames, but was prevented by her attendants. She refused all consolation, taking only a melancholy joy in cherishing her son's horse, arms, and armour.

> Till one long year had passed—then welcome death
> Released her from the heavy load of life,
> The pressure of unmitigated woe.

This is, in rough outline, the story of Sohrab as it is given in the *Shah Nameh*, or Book of Kings, the great epic written by the Persian poet Firdausi in the tenth century, A.D. And this is, in the main, the version that Matthew Arnold followed in his poem.

§4.—ARNOLD'S TREATMENT OF THE STORY.

The most important points of divergence in detail between stories given by Arnold and by Firdausi are mentioned in the notes. See notes on lines 29, 85 (and 223), 150, 347-63, 520, and 659.

Arnold's change was, in general, one of compression; and undoubtedly he has succeeded in making the incidents much more impressive to modern readers, in proportion as they are less long drawn out. For instance the three days of fighting have been reduced to one; in fact the whole action is contained within dawn and sunset of one day. This concentration of interest in the crisis of the poem removes the tedium of the story as it is told in strictly chronological order, and certainly leads to a gain in effectiveness.

His interest however was more in the situation than in the action, in representing the feelings and thoughts of Sohrab and Rustum rather than their deeds. In Firdausi the conversation after the fatal blow is relatively unimportant, but in Arnold's poem this receives considerable attention.

As might have been expected of one in whose poems introspection or psychological analysis is so prominent a factor, he bestowed much more care on the motivation of the action; see lines 243-59 and 345-63. He notes the finer shades of character (lines 380-97, 427-47); and the subtler workings of the mind when under stress of various feelings and emotions—anger, suspicion, affection, hope, despair, grief (lines 457-69, 345-63, 589-60, 694-7, 340-4, 698-705, 616-40).

It is significant that what most readers would pick out as the finest part of *Sohrab and Rustum* is the concluding passage with its sublime contrast, which has many parallels in Arnold's lyrical poems, between all the turmoil, the futile hurry, and the weariness of the busy world of men, and the calm self-dependence of nature. And this, too, in face of his own theory that actions form the true subject matter of poetry. The truth is that the subjective attitude was so dominant in Arnold's mental life that he could not prevent the intrusion of his

own thoughts even in a deliberately objective poem. (*Cf.* note to line 824.) He followed the bent of his own genius, and in his poem the story is, for better or worse, intellectualised.

§5.—OTHER VERSIONS OF THE STORY.

This story of a mortal conflict between father and son has its analogues in the legends of several other Aryan peoples.

A similar incident is found in several versions in old Celtic literature, *e.g.*, the Irish *Aided Conlaoich* (Death of Conlaech). The Irish hero Cuchulain had been in Scotland, or rather Skye, learning feats of arms from the Amazon Scathach, and after his return a son was born to him by her daughter Aiffe, whom he had left behind. He had left a ring to be given to the child, with injunctions never to reveal his name or parentage to a stranger. Some years later the youth Conlaech sought his father in Ireland. They met unknown, and Conlaech, after refusing to tell his name, was killed (though only by one trick of arms that he did not know) by his father in single combat. All too late Cuchulain saw the ring and recognised his horrible deed, and his affection for his son breaks out in a pathetic lament.

One of the earliest relics of German literature is the Ostrogothic *Hildebrandslied*. Hildebrand, the aged instructor in arms of Dietrich (Theodoric), had accompanied his master into exile amongst the Huns. Years later he led a Hunnish army into Italy. He was opposed on the frontier by his son Hadubrand. Not knowing each other they determined on a single combat. The older man asked his opponent's name and parentage, and on being told 'Hadubrand, son of Hildebrand', vowed that

he was his father, and offered him bracelets of gold. But Hudubrand refused these in scorn, thinking that this was only some cunning trick to avoid the fight, or to entice him nearer the reach of Hildebrand's spear; for he had heard that his father had died in battle. Hildebrand could not endure these taunts, and knowing that both armies would scorn him as a coward, he cried out in despair against the fate that doomed him, when he returned after thirty years' wandering, either to slay or to be slain by his own son. They engaged in mortal combat, fighting first with spears, then with swords, and (as we learn from other sources—for the poem is a fragment) Hildebrand slew his son.

§6.—ARNOLD'S LITERARY PRINCIPLES.

In *Sohrab and Rustum*, in *Tristram and Iseult*, and in *Balder Dead* Arnold goes to the past for his subject-matter. In his method of treatment too he followed the models of classical Greek literature. Both in his choice of subject-matter and in his method of treatment he was following a deliberate theory. This theory was stated in the Author's Preface to the poems of 1853.

He asks 'What are the situations, from the representation of which no poetical enjoyment can be derived? They are those in which the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done. When they occur in actual life, they are painful, not tragic; the representation of them in poetry is painful also'.

Because it belonged to this class of situations, painful without relief, and dealt with thought rather than action,

he excluded from the edition of 1853 his previously written poem, *Empedocles on Etna*.[1]

Some critics, however, believe that 'the Poet who would really fix the public attention must leave the exhausted past, and draw his subjects from matters of present import'. This view Arnold considers to be false. He asks 'What are the eternal objects of Poetry, among all nations, and at all times? They are actions; human actions; possessing an inherent interest in themselves, and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the Poet'.

'The Poet, then, has in the first place to select an excellent action; and what actions are the most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections; to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time. These feelings are permanent and the same; that which interests them is permanent and the same also. The modernness or antiquity of an action, therefore, has nothing to do with its fitness for poetical representation; this depends upon its inherent qualities. To the elementary part of our nature, to our passions, that which is great and passionate is eternally interesting; and interesting solely in proportion to its greatness and to its passion.

'Achilles, Prometheus, Clytemnestra, Dido—what modern poem presents personages as interesting, even to

[1] In it he had intended to delineate the feelings of one of the last of the Greek religious philosophers who had lived on into a time when the habits of Greek thought and feeling had begun to change and modern habits of thought and feeling were showing themselves. 'What those who are familiar only with the great monuments of early Greek genius suppose to be its exclusive characteristics, have disappeared; the calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity have disappeared; the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced; modern problems have presented themselves; we hear already the doubts, we witness the discouragement, of Hamlet and of Faust'.

us moderns, as these personages of an "exhausted past"'. We have the domestic epic dealing with the details of modern life which pass daily under our eyes; we have poems representing modern personages in contact with the problems of modern life, moral, intellectual, and social; these works have been produced by poets the most distinguished of their nation and time; yet I fearlessly assert that *Hermann and Dorothea*, *Childe Harold*, *The Excursion*, leave the reader cold in comparison with the effect produced upon him by the latter books of the *Iliad*, by the *Oresteia*, or by the episode of Dido. And why is this? Simply because in the three latter cases the action is greater, the personages nobler, the situations more intense: and this is the true basis of the interest in a poetical work, and this alone.

'It may be urged, however, that past actions may be interesting in themselves, but that they are not to be adopted by the modern Poet, because it is impossible for him to have them clearly present to his own mind, and he cannot therefore feel them deeply, nor represent them forcibly. But this is not necessarily the case. The externals of a past action, indeed, he cannot know with the precision of a contemporary; but his business is with its essentials. The outward man of Œdipus or of Macbeth, the houses in which they lived, the ceremonies of their courts, he cannot accurately figure to himself; but neither do they essentially concern him. His business is with their inward man; with their feelings and behaviour in certain tragic situations, which engage their passions as men; these have in them nothing local and casual; they are as accessible to the modern Poet as to a contemporary.

'The date of an action, then, signifies nothing: the action itself, its selection and construction, this is what is all important. This the Greeks understood far more clearly than we do. The radical difference between their poetical

theory and ours consists, as it appears to me, in this: that, with them, the poetical character of the action in itself, and the conduct of it, was the first consideration; with us, attention is fixed mainly on the value of the separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action. They regarded the whole; we regard the parts. With them the action predominated over the expression of it; with us, the expression predominates over the action.[1] Not that they failed in expression, or were inattentive to it; on the contrary, they are the highest models of expression, the unapproached masters of the *grand style*: but their expression is so excellent because it is so admirably kept in its right degree of prominence; because it is so simple and so well subordinated; because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys.'

Having, then, decided on his material, Arnold will, in order to learn the essentials of poetic art, sit at the feet of the Greeks. They are 'the best models of instruction for the individual writer'. 'Clearness of arrangement, rigour of development, simplicity of style . . . these may be learned best from the ancients, who although infinitely less suggestive than Shakespeare, are thus, to the artist, more instructive.'[2]

[1] Arnold does not wish the Poet to limit himself in his choice of subjects to the period of Greek and Roman antiquity. 'I only counsel him to choose for his subject great actions, without regarding to what time they belong. Nor do I deny that the poetic faculty can and does manifest itself in treating the most trifling action. But it is a pity that power should be wasted; and that the Poet should be compelled to impart interest and force to his subject, instead of receiving them from it, and thereby doubling his impressiveness—.' *Advertisement to Second Edition.*

[2] Compare what he says elsewhere: 'In a sincere endeavour to learn and practise amid the confusion of our times what is sound and true in poetic art, I seemed to myself to find the only sure guidance, the only solid footing among the ancients'. And in the advertisement to the edition of 1854: 'Again, with respect to the study of the

Matthew Arnold's theory is not to be accepted in its entirety. He seems to assume that excellence of subject-matter will necessarily produce excellence in treatment. 'All depends on the subject; choose a fitting action, penetrate yourself with the feeling of its situation; this done, everything else will follow.'

The story of *Sohrab and Rustum* is, as Arnold said in a letter, 'a very noble and excellent one', and full of the deep and simple elements of human feeling; and he certainly did penetrate himself with the feeling of its situation. This is a necessary preliminary, but it is not everything; for it is evident that an excellent subject may be treated worthily or unworthily. *Sohrab and Rustum* might easily have been a less fine poem; Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini* is not to be compared with the episode in the *Inferno* of Dante, nor with the drama by Stephen Phillips; but the inferiority is not due principally to want of feeling for the situation.

Some of Arnold's other deliberate sayings are hardly consonant with his dictum that all depends on the subject. 'The noble and profound application of ideas to life', which he considers 'the most essential part of poetic greatness', must take place 'under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth'. Again, 'to the style and manner of the best poetry their special character, their accent, is given by their diction, and, even yet more, by their movement'.

The ideal that Arnold had before him in writing *Sohrab and Rustum* was that of 'the grand style'. As an example

classical writers of antiquity, it has been said that we should emulate rather than imitate them. I make no objection; all I say is, let us study them . . . '. They will help to cure modern literature of its besetting sin—fantasticism. 'Sanity—that is the great virtue of the ancient literature: the want of that is the great defect of the modern, in spite of all its variety and power. It is impossible to read carefully the great ancients, without losing something of our caprice and eccentricity; and to emulate them we must at least read them'.

of what he means by the grand style he quotes Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I., 591.

> His form had not yet lost
> All her original brightness, nor appeared
> Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
> Of glory obscured.

It arises, he says, 'when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject'. Perhaps a better definition is that given by Mr. John Bailey in a paper read before the English Association. 'The Grand Style arises in poetry when a great subject is treated by the action of the imagination with severity or with a noble simplicity'. He instances Pindar. 'His subjects are not by themselves great subjects; they are the mere victories of aristocratic athletes or chariot owners; but, and this is the important point, he seldom fails so to treat them that they become great, by bringing them into relation with things of inherent poetic greatness, the august beginnings of an ancient and noble house, the connexion of the human and the divine, the eternal majesty of law and right. By the greatness of his nature and the power of his style he carries the minds of his readers far away above his patron's personal achievements, fulfilling and exalting their imagination with the vision of high things of everlasting truth and import.'

It may safely be said, then, that all does *not* depend on the subject; but that there are at least three essentials:

(1) Choice of a fitting action, an excellent subject
(2) 'high imaginative conception of the subject
(3) 'the compelling power of style'.

§7.—GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE.

'What distinguishes the artist from the mere amateur', says Goethe, 'is *Architectonicé* in the highest sense; that power of execution which creates, forms, and constitutes: not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the richness of imagery, not the abundance of illustration'. (Author's Preface.)

From what Arnold has said in his preface about the poetic art we shall expect *Sohrab and Rustum* not to be a poem that exists 'merely for the sake of single lines and passages', but one that depends rather on the 'total impression'. It is great because of his 'skill in discerning and firmly conceiving an excellent action, from his power of intensely feeling a situation, of intimately associating himself with a character'—qualities which Arnold himself notices in Shakespeare. In it his style has all 'the severe and scrupulous self-restraint of the ancients', and their 'conscientious rejection of superfluities'.

Its chief merits, then, are the clearness, sympathy, and power with which the scene and action are visualised; and the restraint and dignity of the style—its directness and simplicity, and the absence of florid ornamentation. *Sohrab and Rustum* shows in a considerable degree what Arnold pointed out as the principal qualities of Homeric style—rapidity in movement, plainness and directness in expression, directness and simplicity of thought, nobility of manner. His language is characterised by purity, lucidity, and precision; and it very rarely fails in finish and grace.

To sum up in the words of Henry James, 'Splendour, music, passion, breadth of movement and rhythm, we find in him in no great abundance; what we do find is high distinction of feeling, a temperance, a kind of modesty

of expression, which is at the same time an artistic resource and a remarkable faculty for touching the chords which connect our feelings with the things that others have done and spoken'.

§ 8.—STRUCTURE OF THE PLOT.

The simplest order of events for a narrative is the order of time, the order in which the events occurred. This, however, is apt to result in a very straggling tale. The epic poet does not usually give his story in strict chronological sequence, beginning from the earliest event, the birth of the hero, but plunges into the heart of the story, leaving any necessary but less interesting information to be given incidentally, either by allusions in the speeches of one or other character, or by deliberate episodes. 'He does not commence a poem on 'The Trojan War' with the birth of Helen; but hurries on to the crisis and plunges the reader into the middle of events just as if he knew all about them'. (Horace, *De Arte Poetica*, 146-9.) Thus the beginning is made more vivid and striking, and the reader's interest is secured at once.[1]

In actual fact the traditions on which the story of the true epic was founded were familiar to the hearers. Matthew Arnold, however, dealt with stories that were not quite so well known, and found it necessary to give this information to the reader by giving in an 'Argument' a short sketch of the plot; see his quotations from Sir John

[1] Homer's *Iliad* begins in the tenth year of the siege of Troy, with the anger of Achilles at being deprived of the captive maiden Briseis. Virgil's *Æneid* opens with the arrival of the Trojans at Carthage; then Æneas relates his previous history. The story of the fall of Troy occupies Books II. and III. *Paradise Lost* opens with a picture of Satan and the fallen angels lying doomed upon the burning lake of Hell. Disregarding some allusions, it is not until Books V. and VI. that the preceding events are told.

Malcolm for *Sohrab and Rustum*, from the Edda for *Balder Dead*, and from Dunlop for *Tristram and Iseult*.

The events of *Sohrab and Rustum* are told in their chronological order in the quotation from Malcolm's *History of Persia*. The poem, however, opens with the dawn of the fatal day, and Sohrab's desire for a single combat. The Persian chiefs, on being challenged, persuade Rustum to represent them; he goes forth to battle, insisting, however, on fighting unknown.

It is to be noted that in the poem

(i) such of Sohrab's previous history as is necessary for the explanation of the catastrophe is conveyed in his speech with Peran-Wisa;

(ii) Rustum's ignorance of the fact that he had a son is conveyed in the regret expressed in lines 229-30,

> Would that I myself had such a son,
> And not that one slight helpless girl I have;

in his disbelief in Sohrab's statement that his father Rustum would avenge his death,

> And with a cold incredulous voice he said:—
> 'What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
> The mighty Rustum never had a son'.

and lastly in the poet's interpolated explanation,

> For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
> Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
> Had been a puny girl, no boy at all—
> So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
> Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.[1]

(iii) the burial of Sohrab in Seistan, and the cessation of hostilities between the two armies is not narrated as a fact, but as Sohrab's request and Rustum's promise.

[1] Arnold wishing to concentrate attention on the crisis makes these explanations very brief; he delays the action only so long as suffices to give sufficient information to enable readers to understand the plot.

After Rustum's promise Sohrab is satisfied and gives up his life. This ends the action of the poem, night comes down, and we leave Rustum alone with his son.

> As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd
> By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
> His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
> Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
> So in the sand lay Rustum with his son.

And then Arnold, who had learnt from his Greek models the value of ending upon a quiet and subdued note, closes with the sublime picture of the majestic river flowing calmly on its course serenely regardless of the tragedy that has just been played out on its banks—a picture embodying once more his favourite contrast between the peaceful independence of nature and the pathetic futility and feverish anxieties of the life of men.

> Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
> Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,
> Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,
> Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
> Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
> Labourers that shall not fail when man is gone.

§9.—THE SIMILES OF THE POEM.

If we judge from their practice, poets seem to have considered the simile to be a form of decoration peculiarly appropriate for epic poetry.

In its simple form the simile is a figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two objects, scenes, or occurrences, which are similar in some prominent respect, although perhaps dissimilar in others. Its primary

function is to explain and illustrate by reference to something more familiar.

> All the blade, like glass,
> Sprang in a thousand shivers. (*ll.* 511-2)
>
> And as afield the reapers cut a swathe
> Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
> And on each side are squares of standing corn,
> And, in the midst, a stubble, short and bare—
> So on each side were squares of men, with spears
> Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand. (*ll.* 293-8)
>
> And Ruksh the horse uttered a dreadful cry ;—
> No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
> Of some pain'd desert lion, who all day
> Hath trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
> And comes at night to die upon the sand. (*ll.* 501-6)

In lines 616-7—

> And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
> Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore.

The latter part is obviously necessary in order to explain the meaning of the metaphorical phrase 'set to grief'. In poetry, however, it is usually intended to make a scene more vivid and impressive.

> for like the lightning to this field
> I came, and like the wind I go away—
> Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind. (*ll.* 722-4)

As Johnson said, 'A simile, to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject; must show it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity; but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it'.

Even in quite simple comparisons like the following from the *Iliad*, Book IV., whose appropriateness none will

doubt, it is evident that the imagery has a beauty and fascination of its own, independent of the aptness and striking nature of the comparison.

> 'As when on the echoing beach the sea-wave lifteth up itself in close array before the driving of the west wind; out on the deep doth it first raise its head, and then, breaketh upon the land and belloweth aloud and goeth with arching crest about the promontories, and speweth the foaming brine afar; even so in close array moved the battalions of the Danaans without pause to battle'.

Homer then notes how all the Greek host advanced in silence

> 'But for the Trojans, like sheep beyond number that stand in the courtyard of a man of great substance, to be milked of their white milk, and bleat without ceasing to hear their lamb's cry, even so arose the clamour of the Trojans through the wide host'.

Many other examples make it clear that in Homer the decorative or pictorial motive very often has outweighed the explanatory or illustrative.

Matthew Arnold, following Homer—and Milton—frequently carries this tendency to an extreme. Like Milton, as well as Homer, 'he does not confine himself within the limits of rigorous comparison', but elaborates the image independently of the points of similarity and introduces circumstances that are quite irrelevant to the comparison and serve only to fill the imagination; evidently agreeing with Johnson's dictum [1] that 'in heroicks that may be admitted which ennobles though it does not illustrate'.

[1] Boileau, too, was of the opinion 'that it is not at all necessary in poetry that the points of comparison should correspond exactly, but a general similarity is sufficient'.

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd; as a cunning workman in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal. (*ll.* 669-78)

Here lines 674-6, although they indubitably have a pictorial value of their own, play no part in the comparison. So, too, in the simile in lines 302-9, the two lines (305-6) speaking of the frosted window-panes are irrelevant to the comparison, although they certainly serve to make the picture more complete and lifelike. Again, in *l.* 317, the bubbling fountain has strictly nothing to do with Sohrab's slenderness.

Occasionally the resemblance is often of the very slightest or the most superficially, but it is developed beyond the point strictly necessary for comparison, simply for the sake of giving a vivid and beautiful picture.

And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came. (*ll.* 284-90)

Here the situations are similar only in the most general way, the fear lest someone should not come and the subsequent joy at his arrival; they are different as regards the causes of fear and in all other respects. By this simile the situation is not elucidated, yet the feeling of

suspense is enhanced. So in the simile of the eagle (*ll.* 556-75) the comparison is still less exact, since ignorance of their loss is the only point of similarity, but the pathos and tragic irony of the situation is certainly reinforced.

Often, however, the imagery that is irrelevant for the strict purposes of comparison is not quite otiose, for if it make the picture more realistic and lively the comparison will be not only so much the more impressive, but probably clearer. As Jebb says, 'if A is to be made clearer by means of B, B itself must be clearly seen; and therefore Homer takes care that B shall never remain abstract or shadowy; he invests it with enough of detail to place a concrete image before the mind. . . . The object which furnishes the simile must be made distinct before the simile itself can be effective'. (*Homer*, p. 28.)

Amongst the finest similes of *Sohrab and Rustum* I would place the two in lines 154-69, where the imagery is not only apt for the comparison and without superfluity, but has a beauty and striking effectiveness of its own, which is enhanced by the felicity and noble directness of expression that is characteristic of Arnold at his best.

Furthermore, they fill a natural pause in the story, when the action is, as it were held in suspense. Here, therefore, as in lines 291-318, the similes are altogether in place. But whether a simile expanded to the length of six lines is fitly introduced into the description of a club-stroke (*ll.* 408-16) is very doubtful; it distinctly delays the movement, which, in this place at least, ought to be rapid. As Jebb pointed out, (*Homer*, p. 26) 'the Homeric simile is not a mere ornament. It serves to introduce something which Homer desires to render exceptionally impressive—some moment, it may be, of peculiarly intense action—some sight, or sound, full of wonder, or terror, or pity—in a word, something *great*'.

§ 10.—REPETITIONS AND ARCHAISMS.

The principal **repetitions** in *Sohrab and Rustum* are in lines 11, 12, and 16; 49, 50-1, 75-6, 177 and 216, 269, 279, 335, 377, 400, 406, 612 and 615, 647-8, 784-94 and 799-805. Repetition of some phrase of his own coinage is a favourite practice of Arnold in his prose writings; 'sweetness and light' and 'high seriousness' are only two of many examples.

The principal **archaisms** are: frore (*l.* 115), sate (*l.* 199 and frequently), helm (264), atop (268), dight and broider'd (277), tale (288), wrack (414), shore (497), anon (561), oped (698), betwixt (719), writ (725).

§ 11.—THE METRE.

Matthew Arnold's two narrative poems, *Sohrab and Rustum* and *Balder Dead*, and parts of *Tristram and Iseult*, are written in blank verse.

In English speech some sounds are made more prominent than others, *i.e.*, they are accented or stressed. It is upon stress or accent that the rhythm of English verse mainly depends; the words are so arranged that the accented syllables occur at equal intervals of time. In other words, verse may be divided into measures or feet, each of which occupies, approximately at least, the same period of time; and the beginning or end of each foot is marked by a syllable more strongly stressed than the others in that foot.

> He spóke; | and Sóh | rab smíl'd | on hím, | and tóok | the spéar | and dréw | it fróm | his síde, | and eásed | his wóund's | impér | ious áng | uish:

Here it is the last syllable of each foot that receives the stress.

Furthermore, this rhythmical series is divided into larger metrical units—verses or lines—which also occupy equal lengths of time; each contains the same number of the smaller rhythmical units, or feet. In *Sohrab and Rustum* each line contains five beats, and therefore is a line of five feet, or pentameter line.

He spoke; | and Soh | rab smil'd | on him, | and took
The spear | and drew | it from | his side, | and eased
His wound's | imper | ious ang | uish . . .

The feet are alike in two respects :—

(i) they are equal in duration;

(ii) the heaviest accent falls on the last syllable of the foot, or, in other words, the rhythm is *rising* rhythm.

They may, however, differ in other respects :—

(i) So long as the time-length remains practically constant there may be one, two, or three syllables in the foot. Usually there are two, and the two-syllabled foot may be regarded as the normal. When there are three syllables they are pronounced more rapidly so that they occupy the same time as a two-syllabled foot. When there is only one syllable it is pronounced slowly.

Examples of trisyllabic feet are :—

Gláred, and he shóok on hígh his mén | acing spéar
Near déath, and bỳ an íg | norant stróke | of thíne.
A foíl'd circú | itous wán | derer : tíll | at lást
His lúm | inous hóme | of wáters ópens, bríght.[1]

[1] In Arnold's verse the trisyllabic feet not combined with monosyllabic feet may frequently be pronounced as dissyllabic because two vowel sounds come together, or are separated only by a liquid *l*, *r*, or *n*, as *ign'rant*, *wand'rer*, *lum'nous*; *i.e.*, the vowel is slurred or elided. This procedure, however, as Professor Saintsbury points out, destroys the beauty of the verse. It is also quite unnecessary; for all that is essential is that the three syllables should be equivalent to the normal two in the length of time that they occupy. Furthermore, there are in Arnold, and more frequently in other poets, trisyllabic feet that cannot be reduced to dissyllabic feet by elision, *e.g.*, the first here quoted.

Monosyllabic feet, except in conjunction with trisyllabic, are rare in Matthew Arnold. That is to say, he did not vary his pentameter verse by lines with only nine syllables. But lines of nine syllables are found in other poets:—

Stáy | the kíng hath thrówn his wárder dówn.
(*Richard II*).

Bóot | less hóme and wéather béaten trácк.
(*Henry IV.*; quoted by Mayor.)

And lines of seven syllables instead of eight are found in Arnold's *Tristram*—

În | Tyntágel's pálace próud.
Whére | those lífeless lóvers bé;
Swíng | ing wíth it; ín the líght
Fláps | the ghóstlike tápestrý.

Trisyllabic and monosyllabic feet are usually found in combination.

At my bóy's | ˄ yéars, | the cóurage óf a mán: (*l.* 45)
But Sóhrab cáme | to the béd | ˄ side, | and saíd. (*l.* 33)
Of the yóung | ˄ mán | in hís, and sígh'd, and saíd:
(*l.* 64)
˄ Córn | in a góld | en plátter soák'd with wíne. (*l.* 754)
˄ Gláred, | and he shóok | on hígh his mén | acing spéar.
(*l.* 515)

These lines can be scanned in no other way if the scansion is to represent the rhythm. Two stressed syllables cannot be pronounced together without a perceptible pause being

This way of scanning such lines is largely due to the convention in vogue before Coleridge's time, that the line should be regular in the *number of syllables*. Even Milton, in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, seems to have followed this idea: for it seems likely that in almost all his verses which have more than ten syllables he would, in theory, have justified the trisyllabic foot on the principle of slurring or elision. Of two vowels coming together, or separated only by *l*, *r*, *n*, the first was elided: 'in glor | y above |', 'pill | ar of fire |' For other examples *see* Bridges, *Prosody of Milton*.

made between them. So 'a younger man' takes no longer to pronounce than 'a young man' because the time occupied by the unstressed syllable *-er* was occupied by a pause. In a monosyllabic foot the time of the normal two syllables is filled up, partly by the stressed syllable, on which the voice lingers, and partly by the preceding pause, which is called a compensatory pause.

Of the yóung | ^ mán |

In the two lines last quoted (754 and 515) some prosodists, *e.g.*, Bridges and Mayor, would say that the stress was 'inverted', and that for the first iamb a trochee was substituted. This explanation, however, ignores (*a*) the pause before *corn* and *glared*, and (*b*) the fact that this scansion would make the line appear unrhythmical, whereas it is not. The voice rests on *corn* and *glared*, and hurries over the next two syllables in each case, so that the accents still occur at equal intervals of time.

A two-syllabled foot in rising rhythm, *i.e.*, one composed of an unstressed followed by a stressed syllable, is called an *iamb*. When this is the dominant foot the verse is called iambic verse. The name blank verse should strictly belong to any verse that is not rimed, but in practice it is confined to unrimed iambic pentameters.

A three-syllabled foot in rising rhythm, *i.e.*, one composed of two unstressed followed by a stressed syllable is called an *anapaest*.

(ii) The ictus or metrical stress is not always of equal weight. In the line

Might now be lying on this bloody sand

the stress on *on* is not as heavy as that on *now*, *ly-*, *blood*, or *sand*. All that is necessary is that it should be heavier that that on the preceding syllable. It frequently happens than a light ictus in one foot is compensated by a slightly heavier one in the adjoining foot.

(iii) Besides the pause (compensatory pause) which, occurring between two accented syllables, helps to fill up the time of a foot, there are two other kinds of which the prosodist must take account (*a*) the metrical pause, marking the end of each metrical unit or line; (*b*) the sense pause, marking the end of a phrase or clause. The sense pause, of course, is present also in prose, and in verse may occur at any part of the line. Its position is frequently, but not necessarily, marked by punctuation. When a clause or sentences comes to an end at the end of a line, then there is a heavy pause; when, however, the line comes to an end in the middle of a phrase the pause is so light that it may almost be neglected. In the latter case the sense and rhythm seem to *overflow* or *run on* into the next line—

> Clustering like beehives on the low flat strand
> Of Oxus, . . .
> a little back
> From the stream's brink . . .
> The men of former times had crowned the top
> With a clay fort; but that was fall'n, and now
> The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
> And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
> Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent,
> And found the old man sleeping on his bed
> Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
> And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
> Was dull'd; (*vv.* 13-29.)

Here seven lines out of seventeen have no sense pause at the end. Contrast the movement of these lines with that of lines 74-82, where each line has a sense pause at the end, or with lines 541-6 quoted below.

There is usually a sense pause within each line, a pause that must be made in reading naturally. It is most

frequently found near the middle; after the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable; but it is sometimes earlier or later. Not infrequently there are two pauses :

though the step
Was dull'd ; for he slept light, an old man's sleep.

Notice the contrast in the position of the pauses in the following two passages.

Unknown thou art ; || yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, || proud and boastful man !
No ! Rustum slays me, || and this filial heart.
For were I matched | with ten such men as thee,
And I were that | which till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, || I standing there.
(*ll.* 541-6.)

Then, || with weak hasty fingers, || Sohrab loosed
His belt, || and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And showed a sign | in faint vermilion points
Prick'd ; || as a cunning workman, || in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion . . . (*ll.* 669-73.)

By all these means a variety of movement is attained without the verse being made unrhythmical. The ictus always recurs at the same interval, thus preserving uniformity of time amid the variety of pause, speed, number of syllables, and weight of accent.

That Arnold was not without skill in verse is evident from the conclusion of *Sohrab*, and other lines ; but his ear was far from certain, and the rhythmical movement of his verse is not infrequently awkward and halting. Some examples of his less successful lines are :—

Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts.
(*l.* 468)

First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears.
(*l.* 118)

To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee. (*l.* 585)
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son! (*l.* 815)

His verse was, perhaps deliberately, cast in a more austere mould than was fashionable in his time, but he was hardly gifted by nature with that 'divine fluidity of movement' which he so much admired in Chaucer.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AN EPISODE

'The young Sohrab was the fruit of one of Rustum's early amours. He had left his mother, and sought fame under the banners of Afrosiab, whose armies he commanded, and soon obtained a renown beyond that of all contemporary heroes but his father. He had carried death and dismay into the ranks of the Persians, and had terrified the boldest warriors of that country, before Rustum encountered him, which at last that hero resolved to do, under a feigned name. They met three times. The first time they parted by mutual consent, though Sohrab had the advantage; the second, the youth obtained a victory, but granted life to his unknown father; the third was fatal to Sohrab, who, when writhing in the pangs of death, warned his conqueror to shun the vengeance that is inspired by parental woes, and bade him dread the rage of the mighty Rustum, who must soon learn that he had slain his son Sohrab. These words, we are told, were as death to the aged hero; and when he recovered from a trance, he called in despair for proofs of what Sohrab had said. The afflicted and dying youth tore open his mail, and showed his father a seal which his mother had placed on his arm when she discovered to him the secret of his birth, and bade him seek his father. The sight of his own signet rendered Rustum quite frantic; he cursed himself, attempting to put an end to his existence, and was only prevented by the efforts of his expiring son. After Sohrab's death, he burnt his tents and all his goods, and carried the corpse to Seistan, where it was interred; the army of Turan was, agreeably to the last request of Sohrab, permitted to cross the Oxus unmolested. . . . To reconcile us

to the improbability of this tale, we are informed that Rustum could have no idea his son was in existence. The mother of Sohrab had written to him her child was a daughter, fearing to lose her darling infant if she revealed the truth ; and Rustum, as before stated, fought under a feigned name, an usage not uncommon in the chivalrous combats of those days.'—SIR JOHN MALCOLM's *History of Persia.*

ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

SOHRAB interviews Peran-Wisa, the Tartar general, and asks for an opportunity for a single combat with one of the Persian chiefs, so that perhaps his fame may reach the ears of Rustum, his father, whom he is seeking (lines 1-62). Peran-Wisa, after hesitation, goes forth as the armies (described in 104-40) were gathering, and challenged the Persian leaders (63-153). Reception of the challenge by either army described in similes (154-69). The Persians after consultation accept the challenge (170-86).

Rustum, the champion of the Persians and their one hope, at first refuses to fight, but is eventually roused by taunts (187-259). He dons his armour, and comes forth (259-90). Sohrab advances to meet him. Rustum, moved to pity by his youth and beauty, attempts to dissuade Sohrab from the duel (291-333). Sohrab, moved by a sudden intuition, asks his opponent if he is not Rustum; but the old hero, suspecting some wily deceit, denies this (334-78). Sohrab is undaunted by Rustum's boasts, since he believes that the result is in the hands of destiny (379-97).

The fight: first stage ending in Sohrab's favour (397-426). Rustum refuses the truce proposed by Sohrab (427-69). Second stage of the fight: Sohrab when unarmed and bewildered by the shout of Rustum, is mortally wounded (470-526).

Sohrab, in reply to Rustum's ungenerous taunts, replies that it was the name of Rustum, and not his opponent's strength, that caused his defeat, and that Rustum, his father, will avenge his death (527-55). [Simile of the eagle (556-75).] Rustum, who had been told that his child was a girl, is at first incredulous, is soon troubled by doubts, for Sohrab recalled familiar names, and was in age and looks just what his own son would have been (575-652), and is finally convinced by the seal which he had given to his wife for their child (653-88). Then, struck with horror at his deed, he desires to take his life (689-705), but is prevented by Sohrab, who is stoically resigned to the ruling of fate (706-25).

The armies are struck with awe, and even Rustum's charger weeps in sympathy (726-40). Sohrab recalls how he has never in life had the good fortune that Ruksh has enjoyed, viz., that of living in Seistan, his father's home (741-70), and requests Rustum to allow the armies to depart in peace, and to carry his body to Seistan for burial (771-94). Rustum promises this, and looks forward to the day when his life of fighting will be ended (795-837).

Sohrab dies (838-56). Rustum watches by his son's body (857-64), and with nightfall the armies depart to their camps (865-74). The poem ends with a peaceful picture of the Oxus flowing steadily on, undisturbed by the terrible conflict in the world of men, to its goal in the Aral Sea.

Sohrab and Rustum

AND the first grey of morning fill'd the east,
And the fog rose out of Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep:
Sohrab alone, he slept not: all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.
 Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere:
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink, the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crown'd the top
With a clay fort: but that was fall'n; and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the ~~thick~~-pil'd carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;

And he rose quickly on one arm, and said :—
'Who art thou ? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak ! is there news, or any night alarm ? '
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said :—
'Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa : it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep ; but I sleep not ; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army march'd ;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou knowest if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,
I have still serv'd Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that, while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone—
Rustum, my father ; who, I hop'd, should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hop'd, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day : but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man : if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it ; if I fall—
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumour of a common fight,
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk :
But of a single combat Fame speaks clear '.
He spoke : and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said :—

'O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press for ever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight:
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray:
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old.
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age;
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.
There go:—Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forbodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us: fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain:—but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening? and who govern Rustum's son?
Go: I will grant thee what thy heart desires'.
So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay,
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;

And on his head he placed his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul ;
And rais'd the curtain of his tent, and call'd
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun, by this, had risen, and clear'd the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands :
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen fil'd
Into the open plain ; so Haman bade ;
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa rul'd
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd :
As when, some grey November morn, the files,
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes,
Stream over Casbin, and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board : so they stream'd.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears ;
Large men, large steeds ; who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands ;
Light men, and on light steeds, who only drink
The acid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service own'd ;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps ; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste
Kalmuks and unkemp'd Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere.

These all fil'd out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians form'd :
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
The Ilyats of Khorassan : and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said :—
'Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man'.
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they lov'd.
But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow ;
Winding so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Chok'd by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows—
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.

And to Ferood his brother Chiefs came up
To counsel: Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who rul'd the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King:
These came and counsell'd; and then Gudurz said:
'Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart:
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up'.
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and said:—
'Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said.
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man'.
He spoke; and Peran-Wisa tûrn'd, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitch'd: the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum: his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood beside him, charg'd with food;
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand;
And with a cry sprang up, and dropp'd the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:—

'Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink'.
But Gudurz stood in the tent door, and said:—
'Not now: a time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day: to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze:
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his name—
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is his.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
And he is young, and Iran's Chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose'.
He spoke: but Rustum answer'd with a smile—
'Go to! if Iran's Chiefs are old, then I
Am older: if the young are weak, the King
Errs strangely: for the King, for Kai-Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honours younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have,
A son so fam'd, so brave, to send to war.
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armour up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,

And leave to death the host of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more
He spoke, and smil'd ; and Gudurz made reply :—
'What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face ? Take heed, lest men should say,
Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men'.
And, greatly mov'd, then Rustum made reply :—
'O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words ?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or fam'd,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me ?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself ?
But who for men of nought would do great deeds ?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame.
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms ;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man'.
He spoke, and frown'd ; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy,
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel : the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And from the fluted spine atop a plume
Of horsehair wav'd, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So arm'd he issued forth ; and Ruksh, his horse,
Follow'd him, like a faithful hound, at heel,
Ruksh, whose renown was nois'd through all the earth,
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find

A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And rear'd him ; a bright bay, with lofty crest ;
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know :
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd ; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.

And Rustum to the Persian front advanc'd,
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swathe
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare ;
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes towards the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and ey'd him as he came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window panes—
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be ; so Rustum ey'd
The unknown adventurous Youth, who from afar

Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs : long he perus'd
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd ;
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.
And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming ; and he stood,
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said :—
' O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant ; but the grave is cold.
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me : I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried ; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe :
Never was that field lost, or that foe sav'd.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death ?
Be govern'd : quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die.
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou '.
So he spake, mildly : Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum ; and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Has builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers ; and he saw that head,
Streak'd with its first grey hairs : hope fill'd his soul ;
And he ran forwards and embrac'd his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own and said :—
' Oh, by thy father's head ! by thine own soul !
Art thou not Rustum ? Speak ! art thou not he ? '

But Rustum ey'd askance the kneeling youth,
And turn'd away, and spoke to his own soul :—
'Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean.
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say—*Rustum is here*—
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry—
" I challeng'd once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight ; but they
Shrank ; only Rustum dar'd : then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away ".
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud.
Then were the chiefs of Iran sham'd through me '.
And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud :—
' Rise ! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum ? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth : make good thy vaunt, or yield.
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight ?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee.
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this ;
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul :
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield ;
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away '.
He spoke : and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet :—

'Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so.
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin: thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art prov'd, I know, and I am young—
But yet Success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Pois'd on the top of a huge wave of Fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know:
Only the event will teach us in its hour'.
He spoke; and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear: down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the co n a hawk
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds
Drops like a plummet: Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash: the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide:—then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield: sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
And Rustum seiz'd his club, which none but he
Could wield: an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough; like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Has made in Himalayan forests wrack,

And strewn the channels with torn boughs ; so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke ; but again Sohrab sprang aside
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand :
And now might Sohrab have unsheath'd his sword,
And pierc'd the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and chok'd with sand :
But he look'd on, and smil'd, nor bar'd his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said :—
'Thou strik'st too hard : that club of thine will float
Upon the summer floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth ; not wroth am I :
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum : be it so.
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul ?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too ;
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men ;
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart ?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven !
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang ;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight ; fight them, when they confront thy spear.
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me' !
He ceas'd : but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage : his club

He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
Blaz'd bright and baleful, like that autumn Star,
The baleful sign of fevers: dust had soil'd
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.
His breast heav'd; his lips foam'd; and twice his voice
Was chok'd with rage: at last these words broke way:—
'Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight; let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war: I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valour: try thy feints
And cunning: all the pity I had is gone:
Because thou hast sham'd me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles
He spoke; and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword: at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west: their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that of the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees: such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,

And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone ;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And labouring breath ; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out ; the steel-spik'd spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through ; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defil'd, sunk to the dust ;
And Rustum bow'd his head ; but then the gloom
Grew blacker : thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud ; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry :
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert lion, who all day
Has trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand :—
The two hosts heard that cry, and quak'd for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
And struck again ; and again Rustum bow'd
His head ; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in his hand the hilt remain'd alone.
Then Rustum rais'd his head : his dreadful eyes
Glar'd, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted, *Rustum !* Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amaz'd : back he recoil'd one step,
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing Form :
And then he stood bewilder'd ; and he dropp'd

His covering shield, and the spear pierc'd his side.
He reel'd, and staggering back, sunk to the ground.
And then the gloom dispers'd, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair;
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.
Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began:—
'Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent.
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool! thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be,
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old'.
And with a fearless mien Sohrab replied:—
'Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thou,
And I were he who till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerv'd my arm—
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce Man, tremble to hear!
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,

He shall avenge my death, and punish thee' !
As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill lake,
And pierc'd her with an arrow as she rose,
And follow'd her to find out where she fell
Far off;—anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers: never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by:—
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss—
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
But with a cold, incredulous voice, he said:—
'What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son'.
And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:—
'Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce Man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be!
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,

My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old King, her father, who grows grey
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honour, when the war is done.
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more;
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain'.
He spoke; and as he ceas'd he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listen'd, plung'd in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all:
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should take the boy, to train in arms;
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem'd he; yet he listen'd, plung'd in thought;
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore
At the full moon: tears gathered in his eyes;
For he remembered his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The Shepherd from his mountain lodge descries
A far bright City, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds;—so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;

And that old King, her father, who lov'd well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time—
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth, which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass;—so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gaz'd on him with grief, and said:—
'O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have lov'd!
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false;—thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son: one child he had—
But one—a girl: who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war'.
But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die;
But first he would convince his stubborn foe—
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—
'Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And Falsehood, while I liv'd, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,

That she might prick it on the babe she bore'.
He spoke: and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks;
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand,
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corselet clank'd aloud:
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—
'Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie.
If thou shew this, then art thou Rustum's son'.
Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loos'd
His belt, and near the shoulder bar'd his arm,
And shew'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd: as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands:—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that Griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks.
Him that kind Creature found, and rear'd, and lov'd—
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bar'd that figure on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand and said:—
'How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's'?
He spoke: but Rustum gaz'd, and gaz'd, and stood
Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry—
O Boy—thy Father!—and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast

His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers strok'd his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life: and life
Came back to Rustum, and he op'd his eyes
And they stood wide with horror; and he seiz'd
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms:
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs chok'd him; and he clutch'd his sword,
To draw it, and for ever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spoke, and said:—
'Father, forbear: for I but meet to-day
The doom that at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it: but Fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; Fate, Fate engag'd
The strife and hurl'd me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this: I find
My father; let me feel that I have found.
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say, "My Son"!
Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be'.
So said he: and his voice releas'd the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms around his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts

When they saw Rustum's grief: and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground, and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one then to the other mov'd
His head, as if enquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and cak'd the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:—
'Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should then have rotted on their nimble joints,
When first they bore thy Master to this field'.
But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said:—
'Is this then Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave Steed!
My terrible father's terrible horse; and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane.
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often strok'd thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,
And said—"O Ruksh! bear Rustum well"!—but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slak'd my thirst at the clear Helmund stream:
But lodg'd among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,

The northern Sir ; and this great Oxus stream—
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die '.
And, with a heavy groan, Rustum replied :—
' Oh that its waves were flowing over me !
Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head ' !
And, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied :—
' Desire not that, my father ; thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscur'd, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age.
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come : thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me ; I pray thee, slay not these :
Let me entreat for them : what have they done ?
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all :
That so the passing horsemen on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and say—
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill—
And I be not forgotten in my grave '.
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied :—
' Fear not ; as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be : for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,

And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all:
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host: yea, let them go:
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all whom I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have;
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown;
So thou mightest live too, my Son, my Son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine; and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say—*O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end.—
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age;
And I shall never end this life of blood'.

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—
'A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful Man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now;
Not yet: but thou shalt have it on that day,
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted Ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai-Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear Master in his grave'.

And Rustum gaz'd on Sohrab's face, and said :—
' Soon be that day, my Son, and deep that sea !
Till then, if Fate so wills, let me endure '.
He spoke ; and Sohrab smil'd on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eas'd
His wound's imperious anguish : but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flowed with the stream : all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now, and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By romping children, whom their nurses call
From the hot fields at noon : his head droop'd low
His limbs grew slack ; motionless, white, he lay—
White, with eyes clos'd ; only when heavy gasps,
Deep, heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame,
Convuls'd him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face :
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth and bloom, and this delightful world.
So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead.
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now, mid their broken flights of steps,
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all ; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loos'd, and fires

Began to twinkle through the fog: for now
Both armies mov'd to camp, and took their meal:
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward; the Tartars by the river marge:
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there mov'd,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon: he flow'd
Right for the Polar Star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large: then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer:—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bath'd stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

NOTES

1. And. The story, being ostensibly only an Episode in a larger series of events, commences with *and* as if to connect itself with the part preceding it in the whole narrative.

4. plunged in sleep. Their sound sleep is contrasted with Sohrab's watchfulness. In this metaphor, sleep is regarded as a river in which the men were deeply plunged. The contrast is emphasised by the superfluous 'he'.

11, 12, 16. Notice the repetition of the word 'through', and of the same idea in slightly different words.

15. The Oxus rises in the Pamir, and so, when in summer the snows are melting, the river is flooded.

25. thick piled, not 'heaped in abundance,' but 'with a thick pile'. The pile or nap of a carpet is formed by the short vertical fibres.

29. In the *Shah Nameh* Peran-Wisa hardly figures at all till after the death of Sohrab. It is hardly likely therefore that at this time he would be an old man.

37. Repetition; *cf. l.* 6.

38. So, 'thus, as I am doing'.

39. as thy son, 'as if I were thy son'. The word *as* is in itself ambiguous; it is used quite differently in the phrase 'to heed thee as my father', *i.e.*, as if you were my father.

42-3. It was in Ader-baijan, a province in the N.W. of Persia, that Sohrab lived with his mother Temineh, daughter of the King of Samengan. At a very early age, being famous in feats of arms, he took service in the Tartar army.

45. Antithesis.

49. Repetition for emphasis; the next two lines give another example of epic repetition ('should . . greet').

52. not unworthy, not inglorious, the rhetorical figure of *litotes*, a deliberate understatement; *cf.* 'a citizen of no mean city', *i.e.*, of a great city; 'he is no fool', *i.e.*, he is the reverse of a fool.

56. challenge forth, elliptical for 'challenge to come forth'.

60. common = general; 'no one can easily win distinction in a general engagement', for all are occupied with their own fights.

61. many names are sunk, metaphorical for 'are lost', as a boat is lost when it sinks at sea.

62. fame speaks clear. Fame is personified.

63. He spoke, imitation of the classical construction, 'he finished speaking'.

67. Share the battle's common chance; either share the dangers, the chance of death, or the chance of distinction and glory. In view of line 69 probably the former.

71. were, subjunctive = 'would be'. The indicative 'it *is* far best' is not used here because the speaker knows that Sohrab will not stay; the possibility will not be realised in fact.

82. Seistan; here a trisyllabic word Sá-is-stán, as in *l.* 750, 757, 799. The modern pronunciation makes it ordinarily disyllabic, Sistan.

83. whether that . . . or in some quarrel. These are alternative reasons for Rustum's retirement, but the parallelism is obscured by the form of expression; in prose correlatives should be followed by similar words or phrases; 'either because he feels the advances of old age, or because he has quarrelled . . . '.

85. the Persian King. The events related in the poem took place in the reign of Kai Kaons (probably the Cyaxares known to Greek historians). Arnold, however, in *l.* 223, names him as Kai Khosroo (probably the Cyrus of Herodotus), who was a grandson of Kai Kaons.

86-7. forbodes, insert 'that'.

87. this field, field of battle.

88-91. There are several ellipses. 'I should be glad to feel sure that you were safe . . . gladly therefore would I send thee hence to seek Rustum by peaceful means, and not to seek duels that are useless'.

91-2. Rhetorical question equivalent to negative assertion. The two questions in juxtaposition contain an implied comparison; Sohrab has the impetuosity and pugnacity that one might expect from the son of Rustum, who was like a lion amongst men.

104. by this, 'by this time'.

111 *et seq.* The simile of the cranes may have been suggested by Homer, *Il.* ii., 459-63. 'And as the many tribes of feathered birds, wild geese or cranes or long-necked swans, on the Asian mead by Kaystrios' stream, fly hither and thither joying in their plumage, and with loud cries settle ever onwards, and the mead resounds; even so poured forth the many tribes of warriors from ships and huts into the Skamandrian plain'.

Cranes always preserve an orderly formation in their flight.

114. the Aralian estuaries, *i.e.*, the estuaries (the wide parts near the mouths) of the rivers that flow into the Aral Sea, viz., the Oxus and Jaxartes.

For the series of proper names in these and the following thirty lines *cf.* Milton, *Paradise Lost*, i. 576-87, *Paradise Regained*, ii. 350-65.

Arnold's names have neither the sonorousness nor the imaginative value of Milton's (*see* Macaulay, *Essay on Milton*, § 24); but they have the advantage of being more appropriate from the point of view of local colouring. On the local colouring of the poem Arnold spent much care, as witness the geographical names here and in lines 750-66, the details in *ll.* 96-101, and the similes generally. Of the similes, Arnold said, 'I took a great deal of trouble to orientalise them (the Bahrein diver was originally an ordinary fisher) because I thought they looked strange, and jarred, if western'. Consequently the poem is distinguished, in the words of a contemporary reviewer, by 'the vividness with which he has seized and expressed the whole environment of his picture, the vast spaces of Central Asia, and the wild freedom of the Tartar life'.

115. frore, an archaism for 'frozen'; the perfect participle of the O.E. verb *freōsan*, to freeze, was *froren*. *Cf.* Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ii. 595.

120. This fermented milk is called *koumiss*.

122. the lances, *i.e.*, the lancers, or men who carry lances. By the figure of metonymy, the name of the instrument stands for the name of the user of the instrument, because of the close association between the two. *Cf.* 'The pen is mightier than the sword', which means that writers have greater power than soldiers; so also 'the press' means the men who use the printing-press, especially the editorial staff of a newspaper.

127. a more doubtful service; their allegiance to King Afrasiab was not very steady.

130. skull-caps; caps fitting closely to the head.

138. Ilyats. This word in itself means no more than 'tribes', but seems to have been applied particularly to the tribes of Khorassan.

142. threading. The usual phrase would be 'threading his way through'. The metaphor implies that it was not easy; 'making his way through with some difficulty, as one passes a thread through the eye of a needle'.

150. According to Firdausi it is Sohrab himself who does this challenging, and in the first instance he challenges Kai-Kaus.

156. This representation of external nature as capable of human emotion was called by Ruskin a Pathetic Fallacy. He might have said that corn could not in actual fact have any feeling of joy, although it may falsely appear to be joyful to an imaginative mind under the influence of the emotion of joy. In connection with Kingsley's line,

'The cruel, crawling foam,'

he observes, 'The foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl. The state of mind which attributes to it these characteristics of a living creature, is one in which the reason is unhinged by grief'. But it may be said that to endow these things 'with animation and soul is not necessarily to

falsify, may rather be to see more to the very root of them'. There is a truth of imagination as well as a truth of science. This figure is really a special form of personification.

161. the Indian Caucasus, the Hindu Kush range of mountains.

162. milk snow. Milk is here used as an adjective; 'snow of milky whiteness'. This gives a much more vivid picture than the plain word 'white', which only conveys an abstract idea.

165. chok'd by the air; a bold use of the word to signify the stoppage of breathing, not, as usual, because the throat or windpipe was blocked by some solid or liquid, but because in high altitudes the air is so thin.

166. It is said that travellers, when crossing high passes, commonly eat sugared mulberries in order to lessen the difficulty of breathing.

167. stop their breath, hold their breath lest by the vibration of the air they should start an avalanche. The prohibition of shouting is a common precaution in Alpine climbing.

169. pale, with fear.

177. take up the challenge = accept. Probably the phrase comes from the mediæval custom of throwing down a glove into the lists as a challenge in a tournament; whoever wished to accept the challenge would pick up the glove.

Arnold prided himself on what he called the 'literalness' of his poetry. This does not mean that he avoided metaphor, although the metaphors, in contrast with the similes, are not remarkable for their frequency; but his metaphors certainly are rarely far-fetched, vague, or obscure in any way.

178. aloof he sits, 'apart or at a distance'. Rustum had quarrelled with the King and would take no part in the fighting. Compare the withdrawal of Achilles from active participation in the siege of Troy in wrath against Agamemnon. For *aloof*, *see* Glossary.

183. the while, 'meanwhile'.

188. through the opening squadrons; they stood aside to make way for Peran-Wisa. Note Arnold's care over details. Previously, as he was advancing from rear to front, they had not made way because they could not have seen him, but now, after he had made his challenge before them, all eyes were upon him.

210. stand at gaze, expectant. Gazing is looking intently at something, and the phrase *at gaze* is used of deer in the attitude of gazing as if expecting something to appear.

217. Antithesis.

Iran, *i.e.*, Persia; Iran was the mythological founder of the Persian race, as Tur was of the Turanian.

221. Go to! an imperative frequently used in Shakespeare expressing impatience or remonstrance.

223. Kai-Khosroo. Arnold has made a mistake here. The events occurred in the reign of Kai-Kaus, the grandfather and predecessor of Kai-Khosroes. *See* note to line 85.

229. *See* Introduction, § 8, for the significance of these lines in the structure of the plot. *Cf.* 609.

232. snow-hair'd Zal. Zal was, according to tradition, born with white hair; hence the name, which means Aged. This was regarded as an ill omen, and he was exposed on the Elburz mountains, where, however, he was rescued and nurtured by a griffin (*v.* line 679). In memory of this he made a griffin part of the heraldic device on his shield.

233. Seistan was on the S.W. border of Afghanistan.

237-41. Notice the effect of these successive lines beginning on the same word. This is a frequent device with Tennyson, who, however, uses much more emphatic words. Compare the lines where Galahad relates how he saw the Holy Grail:

> Fainter by day, but always in the night
> Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd Marsh
> Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
> Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
> Blood-red.

Cf. lines 440-2, 516-9, 802-6.

237. 'And with mý | great name | ˄ fénce | that weák | old mán'. **fence,** 'defend'.

243-8. Rustum is moved only by a taunt, viz., that he is content to rest on his laurels, and is even afraid to risk losing his fame by a defeat. In the *Shah Nameh* the wily Gudurz suggests that Rustum is afraid; but there is nothing like the subtlety of this taunt.

257. in plain arms. Rustum would not wear his customary armour, which was decorated (viz., on the shield, with a figure of the griffin which rescued him when he was exposed in childhood); thus he would not be recognised.

267. helm, archaic for 'helmet'.

268. spine, a metal spike.

269. Epic repetition.

270. Ruksh, or Rakush, 'whose name, being interpreted, meaneth the lightning'. According to the *Shah Nameh*, the young Rustum had been provided with the huge mace of Zál's father, the great Sám, and asked for a steed of corresponding power. None of the many excellent horses of Zal would satisfy him, but at last he saw a fine mare followed by a colt with chest and shoulders of remarkable power, 'whose bright and

glossy coat was dappled o'er like blossoms of the rose upon a saffron lawn'. The mare had killed all who attempted to capture the colt, but Rustum succeeded in noosing the Ruksh and killing the mare. The animal was difficult to break, but once mounted 'the rose-coloured steed bore him along like unto the wind'.

271. at heel, 'close behind'.

275. a colt, in apposition with *whom*.

277. dight, archaic for 'adorned, arrayed'; *cf.* Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 'storied windows richly dight'. *Dight*, from O.E. *dihtan*, should be the infinitive form, the participle being *dighted*.

278. ground, a term in heraldry practically equivalent to 'background'. From the primary meaning of *ground* as 'that which supports, *i.e.*, a foundation or base', naturally comes the secondary meaning of 'background, *i.e.*, the basis on which some work is carried out', and with reference to textile materials that part of the cloth which is of uniform colour and on which the figures are worked.

288. tale, 'number' (that which is counted, or told). *Cf.* Macaulay *Horatius*:

> And now hath every city
> Sent up her tale of men.

(O.E. *tæl*, 'a number'; 'a narrative' was *talu*.)
The members who count when divisions are taken in the House of Commons are still called 'tellers'.

290. pale, with suspense.

It is noticeable how by these three similes Arnold, in true Homeric fashion, holds the action in suspense at a critical moment, and one where the minds of the actors are in suspense. 'The Bahrein diver was originally an ordinary fisher' (*see* note to *l.* 114), but Arnold determined to orientalise his similes lest they should cause incongruity if Western in tone.

293. swath, a line or row of grass or grain mown and thrown together by the sweeps of a scythe; or the passage so cut. (O.E., *swæd* or *swadu*, a track. Skeat suggests that the earliest meaning may have been a 'slice'. There is another *swathe* from O.E. *swadu*, a band or bandage.)

296. stubble, the lower ends of stalks of corn left standing in the ground after the crop has been cut.

304. blackened with the fuel.

305. at cock-crow, at dawn.

306. flowers. 'To flower' is usually an intransitive verb 'to burst out into flower'. Here it is transitive, 'makes flowers on . . .'. This phenomenon, which is, of course, familiar to Western readers, is caused by the moisture in the atmosphere of a warm room being condensed on the cold glass window panes. When the external temperature is below

freezing point this condensed moisture is frozen on the window panes in various beautiful designs, many of which resemble flowers.

Whiten'd, a proleptic use; the adjective is applied in anticipation before it is strictly true. The panes are only whitened when the moisture has been frozen. *Cf.* Keats, *Isabella*:

> So these two brothers with their murdered man
> Rode past fair Florence.

i.e., the man whom they were about to murder. The action is vividly imagined as already done. *See* also line 789.

310. defying forth, elliptic, 'defying and challenging to come forth'.

314. like some young cypress. This comparison is frequent in the *Shah Nameh*, *e.g.*, Rustum's description of Sohrab, 'In stature perfect, as the cypress tree'; and, again, Súdáveh speaking to Saiáwush praises 'That cypress form replete with grace'. (Atkinson's translation, pp. 132 and 146.) Elsewhere, *e.g.*, in the description of Tahmineh, the same phrase is used. The cypress in Greek, and so in English, poetry is traditionally associated with sorrow and death; but in Asia it is symbolic of joy and gladness.

328. Never was that field lost. 'Field' by metonymy for the fight that was fought upon it.

330. Be governed, *i.e.*, by prudence.

331. 'To Ír | an ∧ | and bé | as my són | to mé'.

The second ictus or metrical stress is only an imaginary beat, falling during the pause after Iran. The superiority of this scansion over 'To Ír | an and | be ás | my són | to mé' is obvious, since in the latter *and* and *as* cannot take an accent, whereas *be* ought to be accented.

336. planted. The use of this word suggests the solid strength of Rustum; he stood as firmly as a mighty tree or a tower.

337. Sole. alone; *cf. l.* 563, and *Thyrsis*, 192, 'and me thou leavest here Sole in these fields!' Notice the emphasis given by the metrical movement; *sole* is a monosyllabic foot (with pause before and after) on which the voice must linger.

345. askance, *i.e.*, with suspicion; literally, obliquely, out of the corner of the eye.

347-63. Arnold is careful to give a motive for Rustum's refusal; no reason is given by Firdausi.

347. I muse, poetic for 'I wonder'; *cf. Macbeth*, III., iv., 85. [Probably from Lat. *mussare*, 'to mumble, be in uncertainty'.]

fox, *i.e.*, youth with the reputed qualities of the fox, viz., cunning.

377-8. Epic repetition; *cf.* 406-7, 'sharp rang . . . rang sharp'.

379. on his feet. Note the full significance of these three words:

Sohrab is no longer kneeling and suppliant, but has been roused by the taunt.

383. were, 'would be'; subjunctive used conditionally.

385. dread = 'dreadful'. The verb *dread* which now forms its pret. and participle by adding *ed.* was originally strong.

387-97. This belief in an unchanging destiny is peculiarly in place in an Oriental poem. Its fatalistic tone will need no further comment for those who are familiar with the ideas of Karma and Kismet. *Cf.* lines 708-15, 725, 773-4.

394-5. Epic repetition.

397. the event, 'the result, or issue'; *cf. Hamlet*, IV., iv., 41, 'thinking too precisely on the event'.

399. 'His spéar, | ˄ dówn | from the shóuld | er dówn | it cáme'. Notice the emphatic monosyllabic foot, which makes 'the sound an echo to the sense'.

400. The similitude is hardly exact. The likeness is at most only in the speed of the descent, and even in this respect is not remarkably striking.

402. '˄ Dróps | like a plúm | met . . .'. *Cf.* 399 note.

408. which none but he could wield. Since *but* is a preposition, strict grammar requires *him* instead of *he*. The nominative is used also by Macaulay: 'Which none but he can wield'. (*Horatius.*)

416. and struck. This is a continuation from lines 408-9.

428. *Cf.* 376-8.

435. hollow roar. From the general meaning of 'without body' *hollow*, as applied to sound, comes to mean weak or not full-toned. *Cf. l.* 666, 'with a hollow voice he spake'.

452. autumn star. Sirius, the dog-star, was in the ascendant during the hottest part of summer (the Dog Days), and was in astrology connected with fevers; but it can hardly be called 'autumn star'. It is noted for its brightness.

457. Notice how the irregular metre expresses Rustum's choking passion.

'˄ Gírl | ˄ ním | ble with thy féet | ˄ nót | with thy hánds'.

The principle of the sound seeming an echo to the sense is skilfully expressed and exemplified in Pope's *Essay on Criticism*:

> But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
> The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar:
> When Ajax strives some rock's huge weight to throw,
> The line too labours, and the words move slow.

458. Curl'd minion, *cf. Othello*, I., ii., 68, 'the curled darlings of our nation'; the expression conveys the idea of effeminate elegance.

Curl'd = with curled hair. *Minion* (Fr. *mignon*), a favourite, frequently used to convey the taunt of dependence.

464. fight it out, to the very end.

475. Onomatopœia; words are used which by their very sound suggest the meaning. *Cf.* Tennyson, *Passing of Arthur*:

> Dry clashed his harness [armour] in the icy caves
> And barren chasms, and all to left and right
> The bare, black cliff clanged round him

481. unnatural, because between father and son.

492. It is Rustum's arm that is held stiff.

497. shore, *see* Glossary.

499. bow'd his head, a poetic way of saying that his head was beaten down by Sohrab's blow.

503-6. The comparison between horse and lion does not extend to the former's being on the point of dying.

508. Curdled, 'thickened', as we speak of a man's blood being frozen with fear or horror. Another example of the Pathetic Fallacy. The river is incapable of fear or any other emotion; but to the poetic imagination it is in sympathy with the human beings on its banks, and, feeling the same fear, its waters curdle. The river is regarded as living and personal; hence *his* stream, instead of *its*.

512. sprang, a vivid word for *split*.

517. For the cumulative effect of the repeated *and cf.* lines 237-41 and note.

520. Notice the strong contrast between the chivalrous conduct of Sohrab when he had his opponent at a disadvantage (lines 417 *et seq.*), and the ruthlessness (to use a moderate term) of Rustum. Sohrab had refused to take advantage of Rustum being disarmed; but Rustum has no such scruples. The contrast is equally strong between Sohrab's courteous speech (lines 427-47) and the taunts of Rustum (527-39).

In Firdausi's narrative, Rustum, after being overthrown at the end of the second day's fight, saves his life by an appeal to Sohrab's magnanimity, by pointing out that honour requires that whoever overcomes a brave man in the first contest should not kill him, but allow him to engage in a second combat. 'Sohrab, with force equal to a mad elephant's, raised up the champion, and upon the sandy plain dashed him down backward. Then upon his breast, fierce as a tiger on a prostrate elk, he knelt, ready to cut off the head. But Rustum called out: "According to the custom of my country, the first time a combatant in wrestling is thrown, his head is not severed from his body, but only after the second fall". As soon as Sohrab heard these words, he returned his

dagger into the sheath, and allowed his antagonist to rise'. (*Shah Nameh*, Atkinson's translation.) Rustum's victory on the third day is attributed by Firdausi to his having spent the previous night in prayer.

523. melted. This word is of course metaphorical and not literally accurate; the sun evaporates the minute particles of water which form the cloud, and so makes it invisible".

525-6. Antithesis.

535. or thy craft; Rustum persists in his base view of the motives that led Sohrab to propose friendship.

536. To glad, archaic for 'gladden'; *cf. Balder*, ii., 28. It is possibly used to make the metre syllabically regular; this, however, is not necessary, as an additional unstressed syllable could be introduced without violation of rhythm. *To glád | den thy fáth | er . . .*

537. unknown, a man of no fame. It was accounted a disgrace to be killed by a man who was not famous; so his memory would not be held dear. His body would be left for the jackals to eat, so they would have some satisfaction from his death.

545. I were; understand *if*, to be supplied in sense from the conditional *were I* in line 544.
that which till to-day I was, *i.e.*, 'were I such a warrior as I was before my mind was troubled by the presentiment that you were Rustum'.

546. should, ordinarily 'would'. The use of *should* suggests the further meaning 'they *ought* to be'.

556-75. A simile elaborated beyond the necessities of the comparison.

557. a breeding eagle, *i.e.*, an eagle with the young which she is supporting.

561. anon, archaic for 'soon'. Like 'presently', which has the same meaning, it originally meant 'at once, immediately'.

563. sole, *see l.* 337 note.

568. ken, here means 'range of sight', *i.e.*, out of his sight; *cf.* Arnold's sonnet, *Worldly Place*, *l.* 6, and Shakespeare, II. *Henry VI.*, III., ii., 113, 'For losing ken of Albion's coast'. (O.E., *cennan*, 'to know'.)

570. glass her, *i.e.*, reflect her image as in a glass or mirror. *Cf.* Byron, *Manfred*, II., ii., 25-6, 'thy calm clear brow, Wherein is glass'd serenity of soul', where the word is used, although figuratively, with the same meaning.
It is used differently in one of Arnold's 'Lyric and Elegiac Poems,' *The Youth of Nature*, 'Helicon glass'd in the lake Its firs',

574. Is the comparison exact?

578. *See* Introduction, § 8.

590. my mother, Tahmíneh, daughter of the King of Samengán, a Turanian city in Aderbaijan. According to Firdausi her beauty was as that of the moon, and she was 'graceful as the lofty cypress tree'. The story of the marriage is given in the *Shah Nameh*. Rustum's horse was stolen from him while he was asleep after hunting in the country south-west of the Caspian. He tracked the foot-steps to the city of Samengan; the King of Samengan, however, offered to search for the horse and the thieves, and meanwhile entertained Rustum with lavish hospitality. After a magnificent feast Rustum met Tahmineh, who confessed that she had heard of his prodigious deeds, and of his unequalled valour and renown, and had fallen so deeply in love that she had vowed that she would be the wife of no other man; and, furthermore, that she had ordered the seizure of Rakush in order to entice him to Samengan. Rustum was captivated by her beauty, and a marriage was arranged.

596. dark, 'obscure', hence 'vague'.

bruited up, 'noised abroad'. (Fr., *bruit*, 'a noise'.) Shakespeare uses the word both as a verb as here (I. *Henry VI.*, II., iii., 68) and as a noun meaning 'rumour' or 'report' (*Timon V.*, i., 198.).

607-11. *See* Introduction, § 8.

615. plunged in thought, repeated from *l.* 604. For the metaphor *cf.* note on *l.* 4.

616. his soul set to grief as the tide . . . sets to shore. The word 'set' is frequently used of the wind, tide, etc., meaning 'to take a particular direction', as to 'set to the north'. In this metaphor the emotions of Rustum's soul are compared to the tides of a sea, which run in directly opposite directions. Rustum ceases to be incredulous and scornful, and is moved to grief.

617-18. sets to shore At the full moon, *i.e.*, changes from ebb to flow. When the moon is full then the tides are at their full.

620. all its bounding rapture. Possibly Arnold, who had a great, yet sane, admiration for Wordsworth, had in mind the *lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, where Wordsworth says of his young days, when 'like a roe' he 'bounded o'er the mountains',

> That time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more,
> And all its dizzy raptures.

624. Sohrab's mother. *Cf.* Introduction, § 3, and note on *l.* 590.

625-7. Joyous the monarch smiled, and gave his child
To that brave champion.—*Shah Nameh.*

The cause of his joy was, of course, 'To be allied to warrior so renowned'. (Atkinson's paraphrase of the story of Sohrab.)

632. of age and looks to be, likely to be in age and looks just what any son that might have been born to him would have been.

637. a tower, like a tower in shape, but not in height.

639. upon the common sand. Antithesis between the noble beauty of Sohrab and his condition and surroundings.

645-6. *See* Introduction, § 8.

653. he would convince, 'he wished to convince'. *Would* is not here the conditional auxiliary, but retains the full meaning of the O.E. *willan*, 'to desire'.

656. Truth sits . . . Personification; this form is obviously more vivid and powerful than the mere bald statement 'dying men do not usually tell lies'.

657. far from mine, far from being characteristic of me.

659. seal. In the *Shah Nameh* it was an amulet of onyx that Rustum gave to Tahmineh to fasten upon the arm of any son that might be born. Rustum, when parting from his bride, said 'If the Almighty should bless thee with a daughter, place this amulet in her hair; but if a son, bind it on his arm, and it will inspire him with the disposition and valour of Nariman'. (Atkinson's version.) Such charms are, of course, commonly worn in the East, in the belief that they act as potent spells against misfortune. The wearers suppose themselves safe from all danger.

664. clanked, an onomatopœic word; it originated in an imitation of the sound that it represents. *Cf.* 475 note.

667. were, subjunctive used conditionally, 'if it were true, that *would* be'.

674-6. These lines are, of course, quite unnecessary for the strict purposes of comparison, but they make the picture much more real and vivid.

679. that griffin. *See l.* 232 note. The griffin was a fabulous animal with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle. The classical belief in griffins is said to have originated in the East; according to tradition they were, along with other fabulous animals, set to guard the gold of India.

683. for his glorious sign, *i.e.*, for his heraldic coat of arms.

687. proper, 'distinctive', *i.e.*, peculiarly his own. Latin, *proprius*, 'his own'. *Cf.* Shakespeare, *Julius Cæsar*, I., ii., 41, 'Conceptions only proper to myself'; *Measure for Measure*, v., i., 111.

698. oped. For this archaism *cf. Hamlet*, I., iv., 50.

704. Note the propriety of the metrical movement; *cf.* 387 note.

706. his thought, 'his intention'.

711. Sohrab had a presentiment that this was Rustum. *Cf. l.* 340.

So in Firdausi: 'Alas!' rejoined Sohrab, 'the instinctive feeling was ever at my heart'. There also Sohrab continues: 'Fate, remorseless fate, defeated all my hopes, and stained thy hands in the blood of a son'.

717. that I have found: *that* is here not a conjunction but a pronoun equivalent to 'that which' or 'what'.

719. 'I have but a short time to live.' The comparison on which this metaphor is based is, of course, with the hour-glass, where a quantity of fine sand passes from one bulb to another through a very narrow neck in a definite time.

722-5. Modelled on the following lines in the *Shah Nameh*: 'Such is my destiny, such the will of fortune. It was decreed that I should perish by the hand of my father. I came like a flash of lightning, and now I depart like the empty wind'.

729. And kiss'd | him. || And áwe | ^ féll | on bóth | the hósts. *Him* is a hypermetrical syllable here. Hypermetrical syllables are often found at the pause at the end of a line, but much more rarely at an internal pause. Other examples are: *Hamlet*, III., i., 172—

Was nót | like mád | ness. || There's sóme | thing ín | his sóul.

and Milton, *Comus*, 583—

Alóne | and hélp | less. || Is thís | the cón | fidénce.

735-6. In the *Iliad* the horses of Achilles are represented as weeping for their master.

740. When first, so the early editions, but later editions have **or ere**, *i.e.*, *or e'er* or *or ever*, 'before ever'. *Or* means the same as *ere*, *i.e.*, 'before'; and *ever* has an intensifying force. Shakespeare (*Lear*, II., iv., 288, and *Hamlet*, I., ii., 183) has both forms, but *or ever* is much the older.

756. furrowed with the deep wrinkles of old age.

766. yellow with the sand carried along by its currents.

781. my star, 'my fortune'. The old astrological belief was that a man's fortune depended on the star that was in the ascendant at the hour of his birth. *Cf. Balder*, II., 166 and note. The figure is that of metonymy; instead of 'fortune' is put the name of something that has been closely associated with it.

786. snow-hair'd; *see* note on *l.* 232.

789. far-seen, *i.e.*, 'that will be far seen'. This is a proleptic use of the adjective; it is not yet applicable, but will be in the future. *Cf. l.* 306 and note.

799 *et seq.* A noticeable instance of repetition.

802-6. *See* note on *l.* 237.

824-6. It is easy to hear in these lines an echo of Arnold's own longing for a life of peace and calm. Although it is scarcely in harmony with the spirit of the old-hero legend, its introduction here is legitimate and adds

to the effectiveness of the situation. For a similar sentiment in the mouth of a primitive hero *cf. Balder Dead*, III., 137-44, where Ragnar Lodbroke realises that the life of 'blood, and ringing blows, and violent death' can bring no true and complete satisfaction. Compare to III., 503 *et seq.*, where Balder says—

> For I am long since weary of your storm
> Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life
> Something too much of war and broils, which make
> Life one perpetual flight, a bath of blood,
> Mine eyes are dizzy with the arrowy hail;
> Mine ears are stunned with blows, and sick for calm.

It was rarely that Arnold could escape the painful consciousness that—

> We are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.—*Dover Beach.*

829. 'But thóu | shalt yét | have peáce | ∧ ón | ly not nów.

830-4. According to the *Shah Nameh*, Kai-Khosroo, after a final victory over the Tartars, gave up the duties of sovereignty, and wished to retire into solitude and spend his last days in religious contemplation, preparing for death. Accompanied by several nobles, he set out for a fountain which had been pointed out in a dream. Several of his companions refused to leave him. After warning them that they would perish in a snow-storm, he stepped into the fountain and disappeared. Before returning, the nobles took food and rest, and while asleep were overwhelmed in the drifts of snow. Rustum had, in obedience to the wishes of Kai-Khosroo, returned after one day's journey, and did not meet his death till later.

If Arnold is referring to this expedition, as seems probable from *l.* 834, he is assuming that Rustum continued with the others, and that they returned south over the Aral Sea, and were caught in one of the sudden storms that are so frequent there.

840. imperious anguish. The pain at last conquered his spirit and compelled him to draw out the spear.

855. 'Regrét | ting the wárm | ∧ mán | sion which | it léft'. Here again the lingering movement of the rhythm makes the sound an echo to the sense.

60-4. A simile well adapted to enhance the pathetic sense of ruin that pervades the end of this tragedy.

878. Rejoicing. Here, and in the whole passage, the river is imagined as animate and endowed with human intelligence; a a wanderer, born in the Pamir, trying to make his way to his true home in the Aral Sea, where at the last he will attain perfect calm and peace. The course of the river is emblematic of human life: the bright joyousness of young

days, the weary stress of life in the busy world with its divisions and soul-clogging cares, and at last the peace for which Matthew Arnold so ardently longed.

[So too in *The Future*, man's life is compared to a river—

A wanderer is man from his birth.
He was born in a ship
On the breast of the river of Time;
Brimming with wonder and joy
He spreads out his arms to the light . . .

The river's source was in the mountains, but soon, what had been 'the new-born, clear-flowing stream', enters a different world and 'sluggishly winds through the plain'. Here is all the busy turmoil of the world, through which each man must pass; and the untroubled happiness of nature is lost.

Bordered by cities, and hoarse
With a thousand cries is its stream.
And we on its breast, our minds
Are confused as the cries which we hear,
Changing and short as the sights which we see.

Yet he tentatively hopes that after this harassed life, at last some rest and a calm like that of nature may be gained from 'a wider, statelier stream'.

The width of the waters . . .
As it draws to the ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast,—
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out; and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.]

880. Right for the Polar Star, *i.e.*, due north.

887. The child's earliest days after birth are spent in the cradle; so the phrase is applied to the Oxus near its source.

891. the new-bathed stars; the stars seem to rise on the horizon out of the sea.

GLOSSARY

Abbreviations

F.	French.
M.E.	Middle English.
N.E.D. . . .	New English Dictionary.
O.E.	Old English or Anglo-Saxon.
Lat.	Latin.

anon (*l.* 561), 'soon'. Its meaning, like that of *presently*, originally was 'at once'.

atop (*l.* 268), 'on top'. *A* is an O.E. prefix meaning 'on', or sometimes 'in'; *cf. afoot, aground*, and also *afield, abed.*

afield (*l.* 293), 'in a field'. O.E. *on felda. Cf. abed.*

aloof (*l.* 178), 'apart'. *A*, 'in' on, + *loof* or *luff*, 'the windward direction'. When the wind is blowing to the shore, a ship must be steered against the wind so as not to be carried on to the shore; hence the general sense of 'keeping clear of, or away from, anything'.

broidered (*l.* 277), decorated with needlework figuring. The meaning is derived from Fr. *broder*; but 'this form of the word was due to confusion with M.E. *broid*, a variant of *braid*, to interweave' (Skeat).

charged (*l.* 197), 'filled'.

cope (*l.* 359), 'engage, contend, or match themselves, with me'. M.E. *coupen*, to strike or encounter, often used without *with*, as in Shakespeare, *Troil.*, I., ii., 33, 'he coped Hector in the battle'.

corslet (*l.* 664), an iron breast-plate. A diminutive of Fr. *cors*, body.

dull'd (*l.* 29), 'muffled'. O.E. *dol*, 'stupid', *i.e.*, 'not quick in intelligence or perception': so in general not 'sharp or keen', literally or figuratively; and, with special reference to sound, 'indistinct'.

eyry (*l.* 565), the nest of an eagle. Possibly from a Scandinavian word *ari*, 'an eagle', not from M.E. *ey*, 'an egg'.

fain (*l.* 88), 'gladly', as in 'He would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat'. *Cf. Balder*, III., 555.

[Through the intermediate stage 'glad in the circumstances', it has also come to mean 'compelled, obliged'; as in *Lear*, IV., vii., 38: 'and wast thou fain to hovel thee with swine?']

feast-tide (*l.* 355), 'feast-time'; O.E. *tid* = time.

felts (*l.* 23), pieces of material like thick cloth made by wetting and rolling under pressure matted fibres of wool, hair, etc.

filed (*l.* 135), 'marched in line one after another'; the noun (*see l.* 111) is from Lat. *filum*, a thread.

fix'd (*l.* 147), 'made them halt'. *Fix*, to make firm or stable, so to make motionless, to place in position.

fluted (*l.* 268), 'grooved'.

glancing (*l.* 418), 'darting'.

parcell'd (*l.* 884), 'divided'.

platter (*l.* 753), a plate, or flat dish, used for holding food.

prate (*l.* 577), 'foolish, inconsequent talk'; 'prattle', which often has the same meaning, is a diminutive of this word.

sea-board (*l.* 116), 'coast, side or border of the sea'. (There was an O.E. *bord*, but this was lost in M.E. and replaced by Fr. *bord*.)

shivers (*l.* 512), 'splinters'; the small fragments into which glass or other brittle substance separates when violently broken. A diminutive of *shive*, which means a very thinly cut piece or slice of anything.

shore (*l.* 497), archaic for 'sheared'. O.E. *scieran*, 'to cut', was a strong verb forming its preterite by changing the vowel to *o*, this *o* is still preserved in the participle *shorn* (*l.* 884), but the preterite is now formed as from a weak verb by adding *-ed*.

silt (*l.* 769), the sand or fine earth deposited by running water.

smirched (*l.* 701), 'befouled, soiled'; hence the transferred meaning now more common, of 'disgraced'.

style (*l.* 613), 'title'.

swam (*l.* 693), 'became dizzy'; from O.E. *swíma*, 'a swoon', (whereas to *swim* in water is from O.E. *swimman*, where the *i* is short).

unkempt (*l.* 132), 'rough-headed'; literally 'uncombed', from O.E. *kemban*, 'to comb.'

wrack (*l.* 414), 'wreck'; the usual Elizabethan spelling and pronunciation. (Shakespeare makes it rime with 'back', *Macbeth*, v., v., 51.)

INDEX OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

The geographical setting of the story of *Sohrab and Rustum* is in Central Asia; the country about the Oxus River or Amu Daria, which was the north-eastern boundary of Persia against the Turanian tribes. In order to understand the allusions it will be necessary to consult a map, and to note the relative positions of the Caspian Sea, the Aral Sea, Turkestan, the Pamir, Hindu Kush mountains, and Afghanistan.

Aderbaijan (*l.* 590), the country S.W. of the Caspian Sea.

Aral Sea (*l.* 892), the shallow lake east of the Caspian into which flow the rivers Oxus and Jaxartes. Navigation is dangerous owing to the frequency and suddenness of the storms.

Attruck (*l.* 123), a river flowing westwards into the south of the Caspian Sea.

Bahrein (*l.* 286), a few islands near the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf. A great centre of the pearl fishery.

Bokhara (*l.* 119), a town, capital of a province of the same name, lying between the Oxus and Jaxartes, S.E. of the Aral Sea.

Cabool, or Kabul (*l.* 160), the chief city of Afghanistan, south of the Hindu Kush; it has a considerable commerce, principally in fruit such as dried grapes.

Casbin (*l.* 113), an important Persian city, south of the Caspian Sea, on the lower slopes of the Eburz range.

Chorasmia (*l.* 878); the Chorasmian desert lay about the lower course of the Oxus.

Elburz (*l.* 114), or Elbruz, a mountain range extending along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea.

Ferghana (*l.* 128), a district of Turkestan north of the Pamir, watered by the upper Jaxartes or Sir Daria.

Helmund (*l.* 751), a river rising in the Hindu Kush mountains, and flowing south-west through the plain of Seistan into Lake Hamoon.

Hydaspes and **Hyphasis** (*l.* 412), the modern Jhelum and Sutlej, rivers of the Punjab, flowing south-west from the Himalayas and converging into the Indus.

Indian Caucasus (*l.* 161), the Hindu Kush range.

Jaxartes (*l.* 129), the classical name for what is now called the Sir Daria ('the northern Sir' of *l.* 765), a river rising in the Tian Shan mountains and flowing west and north-west into the Aral Sea, north of and parallel to the Oxus.

Kara-Kul (*l.* 101), a town—and district— some thirty or forty miles south-west of Bokhara.

Khiva (*l.* 120), an important town and province south of the Aral Sea and west of the lower Oxus.

Khorassan (*l.* 138), a province of northern Persia lying immediately to the south of the Attruck River and south-east of the Caspian.

Kipchak (*l.* 131), the district about the delta of the Oxus, north of Khiva. It was occupied by a Kirghiz clan of the same name.

Kohik (*l.* 764).

Moorghab (*l.* 763), one of several rivers that rise in the Hindu Kush mountains and flow north-west into the desert towards Khiva.

Orgunjè (*l.* 880), a small town on the Oxus at the point where its stream is divided into the delta.

Oxus (*l.* 2), the classical Greek name for the river now known as the Amu Daria. It rises in the Pamir plateau, flows westward past the Hindu Kush mountains, along the north of Afghanistan, then north-west through western Turkestan into the Aral Sea. It was important in ancient history as forming an advanced frontier of Persia against the wandering Tartar tribes. In the *Shah Namch*, it is called the Jihun.

Pamir (*l.* 15), 'the roof of the world', the great plateau of Central Asia joining the Hindu Kush, Thian Shan, and Himalayan ranges.

Persepolis (*l.* 861), one of the old capitals of the Persian empire, and a famous burial-place of the kings. It is now deserted, but many of the ruins, including some of Jemshid's pillars, are still to be seen.

Salore (*l.* 122), *see* under Toorkmuns in Index of Tribal Names.

Samarcand (*l.* 40), an ancient city of Bokhara, lying to the east of Bokhara the town, famous for learning and for its silk trade. *Cf.* the phrase 'Silken Samarcand' in Keats's Eve of St. Agnes, XXX.

Seistan (*l.* 750), or Sistan, south-west of Afghanistan; it seems to have formed one province along with Zábulistan, governed by the house of Zál.

Sir (*l.* 765), *see Jaxartes.*

Tejend (*l.* 763), one of the rivers that rise in the Hindu Kush range and flow northwards into the desert south of Khiva, where they are lost.

Zirrah (*l.* 752), a small lake south of Lake Hamoon in Seistan.

INDEX OF NAMES OF PERSONS

Afrasiab (*l.* 38), King of the Tartars, a great enemy of Persia. He aided Sohrab with money and a large army in his attack on Persia. He was finally defeated by Rustum.

Feraburz (*l.* 172), second in command of the Perisan army. 'Fraburz, the son of Persia's mighty lord', he is called in the *Shah Nameh*; *i.e.*, the son of Kai-Kaus, and so uncle or rather great-uncle of Kai-Khosroo, whom Arnold takes to be 'the King' in *Sohrab and Rustum*.

Ferood (*l.* 144), or Ferhád, a Persian leader of royal blood.

Gudurz (*l.* 171), one of the greatest generals of the Persians—

> 'mighty Gudurz, famed for martial fire,
> Of eighty valiant sons the valiant sire.—(*Shah Nameh.*)

He was in command of a later Persian expedition against Turan, *and* was made chief minister by Kai-Khosroo.

Haman (*l.* 107), in command of the army furnished by Afrasiab to help Sohrab.

Jemshid (*l.* 861), the mythical founder of Persepolis; *see* Index of Place Names. He is said to have built a palace of great splendour with the help of some demons whom his father had subdued.

Kai-Khosroo (*l.* 223), grandson of Kai-Kaus. Arnold wrongly takes him to be the Persian king in whose reign the events the episode of Sohrab took place. In Firdausi, however, Kai-Kaus was reigning at the time. Kai-Khosroo is probably identical with the Cyrus the Great mentioned in Herodotus the Greek historian, and Kai-Kaus the same as Cyaxares. At the end of his life he felt an imperious call to the religious life and wished to give himself up to devotion. He therefore committed all state affairs to the care of his ministers, and set out on a journey to a spring or fountain that he had seen in his dreams, where his life would be ended. Having arrived there he stepped into the water and disappeared.

Peran-Wisa (*l.* 11), one of Afrasiab's generals, famous for his wisdom.

Zal (*l.* 82), son of the warrior Sám, of the royal house of Seistan; he was born with white hair, and so was called Zal, *i.e.*, aged. This was regarded as an ill-omen, and he was abandoned on Mount Elburz. There he was found and nourished by the Simurgh or Griffin, until finally Sám, in obedience to a dream, came to reclaim his injured son.

Zoarrah (*l.* 171), or Zuára, was the brother of Rustum, leader of the troops of Zabulistan.

INDEX OF TRIBAL NAMES

Most of the tribal proper names in *Sohrab and Rustum* are those of Turanian peoples. Turanian is a general name for the great family of peoples and languages known as Ural-Altaic, whose main branches are Finno-Ugrian (including Finns, Hungarians, etc.), Turkish, Mongol, and Manchu.

The **Tatars** (incorrectly spelt Tartars) were warlike nomadic tribes who overran Turan (the country north and north-west of the Pamir) and the lands west and north-west of the Aral Sea. They were originally Mongols; their name was derived from that of a section of that race, called the Tata-Mongols, and it is still loosely used as equivalent to Mongol. But there was evidently early admixture with the Turkish branch of the Ural-Altaic family, although they never had any part in the Seljuk or Ottoman Empire; and now the people called Tatars are principally the Turkish-speaking Mongols under the Russian Empire. Tradition asserts that the Turks and Mongols were sprung from two brothers. The ethnographical distinction between the two races is very indefinite; in modern times one can only rely on differences in religion (the Mongols are largely Buddhists), language, and geographical location.

Afghans (*l.* 233), best described as the people living in Afghanistan. Their origin is mixed, and in some cases very uncertain.

Ilyats, *see* note to *l.* 138.

Kalmucks (*l.* 132), nomadic tribes, Mongol in origin and Buddhist in religion, then probably living north-west of the Caspian, but now settled in Sungaria (or Dzungaria), north of Turkestan and the Thian Shan range.

Kirghizzes (*l.* 133), nomadic Turko-Mongolian tribes living chiefly on their cattle. There were two hordes: (i) the Kara Kirghizzes, living about Lake Balkash and southwards to the Pamir, and (ii) the Kaziks (probably the Kuzzaks of *l.* 132), who overran the lands north and east of the Aral Sea.

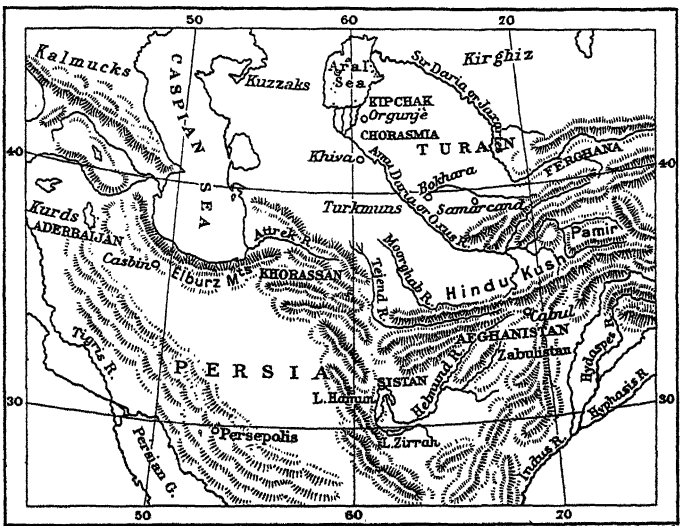
Koords (*l.* 592), a wild ancient tribe occupying the district known as Kurdistan, south-west of the Caspian. Some settle in villages, but the more wealthy and stronger live by brigandage and follow a nomadic life. They were Turanian by origin, but allowed considerable intermixture with the Persians.

Kuzzaks (*l.* 132), *see Kaziks* under Kirghizzes; not to be confused with the modern Cossacks. [The Cossacks were the wandering, and probably nondescript, people who lived on the steppes about the south-east frontier of Russia in Europe. As they became better organised and more daring they were able to keep at bay the constant raids of Tatars and

Turks, and were finally recognised as a semi-independent part of the Russian Empire, and received certain privileges in return for military service. Their name was originally applied to their marauding enemies, Kazaki, *i.e.*, 'freebooters'.]

Toorkmuns, or Turkomans (*l.* 121), the wandering tribes living on that part of the plain of Turan which lies between the Caspian and the Oxus. Brigandage was their most lucrative occupation. In origin they were, like the inhabitants of Aderbaijan, similar to the western Turks. Amongst their tribes are the *Salors.*

Tukas (*l.* 122), probably a Turkish tribe like the Salors.


50
60
70
40
30
Kalmucks
CASPIAN SEA
Kuzzaks
Aral Sea
Sir Daria or Jaxartes
Kirghiz
KIPCHAK
Orgunjè
CHORASMIA
TURAN
Khiva
Amu Daria or Oxus
Bokhara
FERGHANA
Samarcand
Turkmuns
Kurds
ADERBAIJAN
Casbin
Elburz Mts
Attrek R.
KHORASSAN
Tejend R.
Moorghab R.
Hindu Kush
Pamir
Kabul
AFGHANISTAN
Zabulistan
PERSIA
Tigris R.
L. Hamun
SISTAN
Helmund R.
Hydaspes R.
Hyphasis R.
Persepolis
L. Zirrah
Persian G.
Indus R.
George Philip & Son, Ltd

BALDER DEAD

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	57
I.—SOURCE AND MATERIAL	57
§ 1. The *Edda*	57
§ 2. Norse Cosmology	58
§ 3. Niflheim and Valhalla—The Valkyries	59
§ 4. Odin, Thor, and Frea	60
§ 5. The Power of Fate—The Nornies	62
§ 6. Balder	63
§ 7. The Story of Balder and Hodur	65
§ 8. Lok	66
§ 9. The Twilight of the Gods	67
II.—FORM AND STYLE	67
§ 10. General Characteristics	67
§ 11. Epic Repetitions and Archaisms	68
§ 12. The Similes	68
§ 13. The Verse	70
BALDER DEAD	75
ANALYSIS OF THE POEM	111
NOTES	112
GLOSSARY	125

INTRODUCTION

I.—Source and Material

§1.—THE EDDA

The subject of Balder Dead is taken from Norse Mythology as represented in the Younger or Snorra Edda. 'Mallet and his version of the *Edda* is all the poem is based upon', says Matthew Arnold in a letter.

Edda was the name given, in one case erroneously, to each of two collections of old Icelandic literature, mainly consisting of mythological and heroic legend. The material of the Prose or Younger Edda probably belongs to the middle of the twelfth century; it was put together and arranged half a century later by a scholar named Snorri Sturleson, and hence it is called the Snorra Edda. It is, in Carlyle's words, 'a kind of Prose Synopsis of the whole Mythology; elucidated by new fragments of traditionary verse'. The nucleus of the book was a treatise on the poetic art 'containing the old rules for verse-making and poetic diction; but as the diction included a large number of allusions and phrases derived from the old Northern Mythology, a summary was also given of the myths from which they all were drawn'. (Morley, *English Writers*.) Hence, as Whitney says, 'the Edda is the purest and most abundant source of knowledge for primitive northern conditions'. The pagan lays about gods and heroes which make up the so-called Poetic or Elder Edda were probably composed between 800 and 1050; and preserved orally for some time before they were collected and committed to writing about the middle of the thirteenth century. The Icelandic bishop who in 1643 discovered the MS.

wrongly attributed it to Sæmund, a scholar and Christian priest. He thought that it was the source of Snorri's work, and so gave it the name of Edda; the name, however, which means a treatise on poetic art, is inaccurately applied to what was only a collection of lays.

Mallet, a French professor at Copenhagen during the latter half of the eighteenth century, wrote one or two works on Northern Antiquities, which included a translation, through a Latin version, of the Edda. This was turned into English by Thomas Percy, the antiquarian and compiler of the famous *Reliques*.

§2.—NORSE COSMOLOGY

It will be well to give at the onset a very short summary of the main conceptions of the Norse Mythology.

The universe was inhabited by gods, men, and giants. Out of the original chaos Odin, the father of the gods, made heaven and earth, and the race of man. He destroyed the race of the giant Ymir, whom the abyss of chaos had brought forth, all save one, from whom the second race of giants sprang. Between the giants and the gods was a constant feud. The Æsir, or gods, had their dwellings in Asgard, surrounded by a great wall. Midgard was the abode of men, and was connected with Asgard, the sky or roof of the earth, by a bridge, Bifrost (I., 146).[1] Midgard was regarded as an outpost between Asgard and the land of the Giants, Utgard. (I., 142, Midgard fortress.)

A great ash-tree, Igdrasil, covered the whole earth with its evergreen branches. From it dropped all the dew and the moisture that formed the rivers of the world. From its roots flowed a spring which was guarded by

[1] Bifrost probably represents the rainbow.

Mimir, the uncle of Odin ; from this spring Mimir received the wisdom and the knowledge of past and future for which he was famous. Here too sat the Nornies (III., 221). At the foot of the tree were held the councils of the Gods.[1] (II., 32-4).

§3.—NIFLHEIM AND VALHALLA— THE VALKYRIES

Under one of the roots of Igdrasil, the one furthest away from the sun and the dwellings of men, was Niflheim (the fog-world), the equivalent of Hell, where dwell the ghosts of those craven-hearted ones who have not died in battle.

> Only the inglorious sort are there below,
> The old, the cowards, and the weak are there—
> Men spent by sickness, or obscure decay. (I., 323-5.)

Those who have lived and died as heroes, and have met their death on the battle-field, were received into Valhalla, the Hall of the Dead.

> All the nobler souls of mortal men
> On battle-field have met their death, and now
> Feast in Valhalla . . . (I., 320-2.)

They were the favourites of Odin, the God of War, and lived a new life like that of the Gods. They spend their time in the joy of fighting,

[1] 'Igdrasil, the Ash-tree of Existence, has its roots deep down in the kingdoms of Hela or Death ; its trunk reaches up heaven-high, spreads its boughs over the whole Universe : it is the Tree of Existence. At the foot of it, in the Death Kingdom, sit Three *Nornas*, Fates,—the Past, Present, Future ; watering its roots from the Sacred Well. Its "boughs," with their buddings and disleafings,—events suffered, things done, catastrophes,—stretch through all lands and times'. According to Carlyle this tree is a symbol of life itself. The student should read the interpretation in *Heroes and Hero-Worship*.

But all at night return to Odin's hall,
Woundless and fresh ;

and there they feast with the Gods.

Hence it is an honour to be chosen out for death in the fight by the Valkyries, the female warriors who afterwards in Odin's hall hand round the horns of mead to the heroes. 'There are also' says the Edda, 'many maidens who do service in Valhalla, pouring beer for the heroes, and looking after the horns and the things of the table. These goddesses are named the Valkyrs. Odin sends them forth into the battle-fields to choose those who shall be slain'.

'The *Valkyrs* are Choosers of the Slain: a Destiny inexorable, which it is useless trying to bend or soften, has appointed who is to be slain ; this was a fundamental point for the Norse believer'. His main practical belief was, says Carlyle, that 'of an inflexible *Destiny* ; and that the one thing needful for a man was *to be brave*. . . . That these *Choosers* lead the brave to a heavenly *Hall of Odin* ; only the base and slavish being thrust elsewhither, into the realms of Hela the Death-goddess: I take this to have been the soul of the whole Norse belief. They understood in their heart that it was indispensable to be brave ; that Odin would have no favour for them, but despise and thrust them out, if they were not brave'. This was an attitude that was bound to appeal powerfully to Arnold, whose admiration for the Stoic ideals of conduct is evident from several poems.

§4.—ODIN, THOR, AND FREA

Odin, or Woden, 'the father of men', was the god of song and of war. He was the wisest and most universally powerful of the Gods, and was recognised as their chief. From his palace of Hlidskialf he could see all that

happened on earth. He was probably the embodiment of all that the Scandinavian tribes prized most in character and human accomplishments. 'He was the Chief God to all the Teutonic Peoples; their Pattern Norseman'. Carlyle gives a fascinating explanation of how a great national hero, who in addition had great wisdom, and invented writing and poetry, a man whose genius showed itself in thought as well as action, would in a primitive age be regarded after one or two generations as divine.

Thor was the god who had charge of the crops and who ruled the thunder. He was the god of Summer-heat, both in its beneficent and in its destructive aspect; 'the god of Peaceable Industry as well as Thunder'. So he is called Protector of the Earth, Friend of Men; and was even looked on as guardian of the home. He had great strength, which he used principally against the Giants, the dark hostile Powers of Nature (II., 49); his weapon was a short-handled hammer, probably representing the thunderbolt.

Thor is an excellent example to illustrate Carlyle's observation that 'the essence of Scandinavian and indeed of all Paganism is a recognition of the forces of Nature as godlike, stupendous personal Agencies—as Gods and Demons'.[1]

'Thunder was not then mere Electricity . . . ; it was the God Donner (Thunder) or Thor . . . The thunder was his wrath; the gathering of the black clouds is the drawing down of Thor's angry brows; the fire bolt bursting out of

[1] 'The primary characteristic of this old Northland Mythology I find to be Impersonation of the visible workings of Nature. Earnest simple recognition of the workings of Physical Nature, as a thing wholly miraculous, stupendous and divine. What we now lecture of as Science, they wondered at, and fell down in awe before, as Religion. The dark hostile Powers of Nature they figure to themselves as "*Jötuns*", Giants, huge shaggy beings of a demoniac character. Frost, Fire, Sea-tempest; these are Jötuns. The friendly Powers again, as Summer-heat, the Sun, are Gods. The empire of this Universe is divided between these two; they dwell apart, in perennial internecine feud'.

Heaven is the all-rending Hammer flung from the hand of Thor: he urges his loud chariot over the mountain-tops,—that is the peal; wrathful he 'blows in his red beard',—that is the rustling stormblast before the thunder begins'.

Frea, Frig, or Frija, was the earth-goddess, Odin's wife, and 'mother of the Gods'. She knew all that should happen to men (*see* I., 108); and lived not only in Hlidskialf, but also in Fensalir in the depths of the earth.

Few students will need reminding that the names of these three principal deities in Northern Mythology are preserved in the English names of three days of the week; Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

§5.—THE POWER OF FATE—THE NORNIES

All beings, whether Gods or men, were subject to the rule of an inexorable fate or destiny. Among the Anglo-Saxons this impersonal power was called Wyrd. 'Wyrd goeth ever as she must,' says Beowulf. In Scandinavian mythology the power was definitely personified, and was represented by three sisters, the Nornies, who presided respectively over the Past, Present, and Future, as is indicated by their names, Urthr, Verthandi, and Skuld.

The rulings of destiny were accepted as binding by all (*see* I., 23-5, and 114-5, where Frea rebukes Hoder for thinking that Balder's fate might be changed); although Odin himself decreed the inflexible course of fate, he was subject to its sway.

> Of all powers the mightiest far art thou,
> Lord over men on earth, and Gods in Heaven;
> Yet even from thee thyself hath been withheld
> One thing—to undo what thou thyself hast ruled.
> For all which hath been fixt, was fixt by thee.
>
> (III., 250-4.)

The two powers, Odin's and that of fate, were perhaps co-ordinate; but the whole conception is vague, and we can hardly say more than that the functions of the Nornies were in general similar to those of the classical Fates (Moirae, Parcae), whose power seems to have been regarded both as an expression of the will of Zeus and as existing independently of and even above that will. On the whole the fateful power of the Teutons seems the more implacable.[1]

§6.—BALDER

The main actors in the story of Balder are three of the lesser gods—Balder, Hoder, and Lok.

Balder was a son of Odin, exceedingly beautiful. 'He is most fair to view', says the Edda, 'and so bright that he darts forth rays of light'. The attribution of this quality is doubtless due to the fact that he probably represents the sun. 'Balder again, the White God, the beautiful, the just and benignant (whom the early Christian Missionaries found to resemble Christ), is the Sun'.

One of the dominant notes of Matthew Arnold's lyrical poetry is his longing for peace and calm, for freedom from the busy turmoil of the world, from the clash and din of conflict.

I, on men's impious uproar hurl'd,
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world,
And now keeps only in the grave.

[1] The evolution of the idea of fate is well expressed by Steuding in his Greek and Roman Mythology: 'As order and law in the states of men came gradually to prevail over the arbitrary will of the strong man, these ideas were independently personified in the Goddesses of Fate standing by the side of the Gods of the older time—Gods conceived entirely on the model of human rulers, as swayed by passions'.

It is therefore characteristic that from a body of literature which celebrates more often the harder and more rugged qualities of manhood he chose a story of the mildest of the Gods. Balder alone among the Gods is remarkable not for mighty deeds but for his personality. It is Balder who says —

> For I am long since weary of your storm
> Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life
> Something too much of war and broils, which make
> Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood.

His spirit is stunned with violence and 'sick for calm'. It is Balder, too, who prophesies the coming of a happier day, the rise of a second Asgard :

> There reassembling we shall see emerge
> From the bright Ocean at our feet an earth
> More verdant than the last, with fruits
> Self-springing, and a seed of man preserved,
> Who then shall live in peace, as now in war.

Ragnar Lodbrok, when mourning Balder, says of the other bards :

> But they harp ever on one string, and wake
> Remembrance in our soul of wars alone,
> And blood, and ringing blows, and violent death.
> But when thou sangest, Balder, thou didst strike
> Another note, and, like a bird in spring,
> Thy voice of joyance minded us, and youth,
> And wife, and children, and our ancient home.[1]

[1] The same note is struck in Rustum's cry,

> But now in blood and battles was my youth,
> And full of blood and battles is my age ;
> And I shall never end this life of blood.—(*Sohrab*, 824-6.)

Compare also the lines in *Dover Beach*,

> Ah, love, let us be true
> To one another ! for the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,

§7.—THE STORY OF BALDER AND HODER

The story of Balder is given in the quotation from the Younger Edda which Arnold printed as a note to the poem. This is a late version of the story, showing extensively the influence of Christianity. One addition is the projected recovery of Balder from Niflheim, and the conditions proposed. 'An old hero saga has in the Edda been changed into a saga of the gods. Neither Balder, nor his wife Nanna, nor his foe Hoder were originally gods; they all once walked the earth'. (Kauffmann, *Northern Mythology*.) The earlier version is preserved in the Danish saga as given by Saxo Grammaticus which runs, in outline, as follows:

Hoder, a young hero, and Balder, who, being a son of Odin, was a demigod, were rivals for the love of Nanna. The suit of Hoder was favoured both by Nanna and by her father. Balder therefore led an expedition to win his bride. Hoder had a coat of mail that was proof against all weapons; but Balder seems to have needed no protection at all, for nothing could wound him save a strong sword called Mistilteinn [1] which was closely guarded by a forest spirit. Hoder, by the help of Nanna's father and of the Valkyries, gained possession of this sword. The first conflict ended in favour of Hoder; Balder began to pine away at the thought of Nanna being lost to him, but roused himself and in the second battle put Hoder to flight. A third fight was doubtful in issue; but Hoder, who was

> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confus'd alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.

[1] Excalibur, the sword of Arthur, and Durendal, the sword of Orlando, are the most famous instances of the custom of naming weapons.

again helped by the Valkyries and was girt with a strength-giving belt, met Balder by night and killed him with the sword Mistilteinn.[1]

'Originally, then, the story was not a saga of the gods at all. Two famous heroes, deadly rivals in their love of the same maiden, are under the protection of the gods and of fate, by whom their lives are supernaturally controlled'. Baleder was Odin's son and a demi-god. 'In the course o tim, to judge from the traditions preserved, he developedf into an independent deity'. (Kauffman, loc. cit.)[2]

There was also some confusion with the word Mistilteinn. 'This was originally the name of the magic sword with which Hoder gave the death-blow to his foe. The word was afterwards by an error literally interpreted as the mistletoe, and round this mistake an accretion of foreign elements collected by a process no longer traceable'. (Kauffmann, loc. cit.)

§8.—LOK

Lok or Loki is the evil spirit among the gods, marked by cunning and perfidy. He was the origin of woe in heaven and earth, and in particular of Balder's death. In origin akin to the giants, he seems to have been recognised also as a god. He was the father of Hela the goddess of Niflheim, of two monsters, the wolf Fenris, who was to help in the destruction of the gods, and Midgardsormr, the huge serpent which lay in the ocean round Midgard.

When the gods sought to avenge the death of Balder he fled and took the form of a salmon, but was caught and bound on sharp rocks in a cave. A snake's venom dropped

[1] This bare sketch is based on the fuller summary given by Kauffmann.

[2] For the way in which such a deification might take place, *see* Carlyle's lecture on the Hero as Divinity.

on his face ; this tormented him so much that in his agony he made the earth quake. This punishment lasted until the final battle.

§9.—THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

According to the Edda all things will some day come to an end—when Ragnarok comes, the Twilight of the Gods. All the spirits of evil will break loose ; Fenris the wolf, and the great serpent ; and Lok, at the head of an army of giants and the warriors of hell, will destroy the gods, despite the slaying of the wolf and the serpent. The whole order of things will change ; a new world and new beings will appear. Vidar, the guardian of order and justice, after avenging the gods will rule in glory. Balder and Hoder will come again ; and this will be the beginning of a new and better age. (*See* III., 518, *et seq.*)

'The Gods and Jötuns, the divine Powers and the chaotic brute ones, after long contest and partial victory by the former, meet at last in universal world-embracing wrestle and duel ; World-serpent against Thor, strength against strength : mutually extinctive ; and ruin, 'twilight' sinking into darkness, swallows the created Universe. The old Universe with its Gods is sunk ; but it is not final death : there is to be a new Heaven and a new Earth ; a higher supreme God, and justice to reign among men'. (Carlyle.)

II.—FORM AND STYLE

§10.—GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Balder Dead is evidently a heroic narrative, but does not, like *Sohrab and Rustum*, reproduce in little the epic structure ; it is rather like an episode that might have

formed one 'book' of a northern Iliad (*cf.* note on episodical character of the opening line). The subject matter, however, is largely epic in character, and the details of epic style are imitated freely: the characters are made to speak in their own persons (*cf.* Introduction to *Sohrab*, §2), the verse is heroic, the diction is often archaic, and epic repetitions abound. The style has a classical distinction that helps to preserve all the dignity and beauty of the myth; it also has the classical purity of language, lucidity of phrase, and clearness of pictorial outline.

§11.—EPIC REPETITIONS AND ARCHAISMS

Repetitions: I., 8 and 104; I., 22 and 126; I., 36 and III., 56; I., 38 and 101; I., 46 and III., 52; I., 141 and II., 22; I., 143 *et seq.* and II., 179 *et seq.*; I., 178, 319, II., 179, 201, and III., 40; I., 180-1 and II., 192-3; I., 202 and III., 220; II., 213 and III., 283; II., 234 *et seq.*, and III., 42 *et seq.*

Archaisms: spake (I., 17), bare (I., 24), erst (I., 36), sate (I., 64), eterne (I., 89), marge (I., 161), fare (I., 165 and II., 78), bespake (I., 215), hest (I., 241); to glad (II., 28), otherwhile (II., 29), drave (II., 61), strait (II., 88), kine (II., 92), hath wax'd amain (II., 210); marge (III., 280), good lack (III., 343), of yore (III., 545).

§12.—THE SIMILES

Similes are not so numerous in *Balder* as in *Sohrab and Rustum*, but they are again of two distinct types.

(1) There is firstly the simple, undeveloped simile where no more imagery is given than is necessary for purposes of comparison—

And as, in a decaying winter-fire,
A charr'd log, falling, makes a shower of sparks—
So with a shower of sparks the pile fell in,
Reddening the sea around ; and all was dark.
(III., 203-6.)

As in some boor's yard a sweet-breath'd cow,
Whose manger is stuff'd full of good fresh hay,
Snuffs at it daintily, and stoops her head
To chew the straw, her litter, at her feet—
So ye grow squeamish, Gods, and sniff at heaven.
(III., 340-4.)

(2) Secondly, there is the elaborated or expanded simile, where the image is developed to a point beyond what is necessary for strict purposes of comparison. The poet seems loath to leave the picture until he has made it complete in itself. *See* III., 6-19, and the note on the passage ; and also II., 90-9.

Scant space that warder left for passers by :—
But as when cowherds in October drive
Their kine across a snowy mountain-pass
To winter-pasture on the southern side,
And on the ridge a waggon chokes the way,
Wedged in the snow ; then painfully the hinds
With goad and shouting urge their cattle past,
Plunging through deep untrodden banks of snow
To right and left, and warm steam fills the air—
So on the bridge that damsel blocked the way . . .

Here lines 95-8, concerning the cattle and the shouting and the steam, have no strict bearing on the comparison, which indeed is not very apt, yet they have their own pictorial value and æsthetically make the whole much more satisfying. Again, even in so short a simile as that in I., 230-5—

And as a spray of honeysuckle flowers
Brushes across a tired traveller's face
Who shuffles through the deep dew-moisten'd dust,
On a May evening, in the darken'd lanes,
And starts him, that he thinks a ghost went by—
So Hoder brush'd by Hermod's side . . .

one part of the description—the shuffling through the dust—is irrelevant; yet such a realistic touch would not willingly be sacrificed. All these added circumstances serve to fill the imagination.

There are in *Balder Dead* several instances, more than in *Sohrab and Rustum*, where the simile is developed to considerable length, while practically all the imagery has a direct bearing on the comparison—

And as the swallows crowd the bulrush-beds
Of some clear river, issuing from a lake,
On autumn-days, before they cross the sea ;
And to each bulrush-crest a swallow hangs
Quivering, and others skim the river streams,
And their quick twittering fills the banks and shores—
So around Hermod swarm'd the twittering ghosts.
(II., 157-63.)

See also II., 295-301 ; III., 307-19 ; III., 357-68.

§13.—THE VERSE

Balder Dead is like *Sohrab and Rustum* written in heroic blank verse, *i.e.*, unrimed iambic pentameter. The normal line has five full stresses and all the feet iambic :—

And máke | him léap | the gráte | and cóme | within.
(I., 170.)

By way of variation (*a*) sometimes the ictus falls on a syllable that can carry only a very light stress :—

Which brânch | es fròm | the nórth of Héaven and ríde. (I., 144.)

The other syllable of the foot is incapable of receiving even the weakest accent. See also I., 167-8; III., 227 and 436.

(*b*) Feet of three syllables (anapæsts) may be substituted for ambs, the unstressed syllables being pronounced rapidly (or even slurred) in order to make the duration of the foot approximately equal to that of an iamb.

And stíll | the accépt | ance fóllows mé, which crówn'd. (III., 467.)

Or ís he míngled with | the unnúmb | er'd déad. (III., 436.)

(*Cf.* also I., 58, 98, 105, 177.)

(*c*) More rarely a monosyllabic foot is substituted, making the line one of nine syllables only :—

And the ray-crowned Balder answer'd him. (III., 523.)

This line is bad because undue weight must be given to the unimportant word *and* and too little weight to *crowned*.

(*d*) Most frequently monosyllabic and trisyllabic feet are found in combination :—

And the twó | ˄ hósts | are márshall'd ànd in Heáven (III., 501.)

And the píle | crácl | led ; ánd betwéen the lógs. (III., 187.)

(Here obviously it would give an utterly false dea of the rhythm to scan 'And thé | two hósts | . . .' 'And thé | pile crácl | led . . .')

Of cár | nage and fínd | ˄ Hér | mod, ìn your lífe. (III., 510.)

Háil, | and farewéll ! | for hére thou cóm'st no móre.
(III., 461.)

the fleet-footed Hermod came
Hóme, | and lay dówn | to sléep in his own house.
(I., 247.

Here obviously the voice must dwell on *Hail* and *Home* so that they occupy a longer time than a syllable marked with the normal degree of stress in an iambic foot.

(*e*) There is considerable variety in the position of the internal rhythmical pauses ; *see* III., 550-72.

And overflowing rhythm or the running-on lines is used to give further variety of movement—

for Nanna came
Lately below, and join'd him ; and the pair
Frequent the still recesses of the realm
Of Hela . . . (III., 439-42.)

Cf. III., 454-7, 363-73, 533-49.

BALDER DEAD

"Balder the Good having been tormented with terrible dreams, indicating that his life was in great peril, communicated then to the assembled Æsir, who resolved to conjure all things to avert from him the threatened danger. Then Frigga exacted an oath from fire and water, from iron and all other metals, as well as from stones, earths, diseases, beasts, birds, poisons, and creeping things, that none of them would do any harm to Balder. When this was done it became a favourite pastime of the Æsir, at their meetings, to get Balder to stand up and serve them as a mark, some hurling darts at him, some stones, while others hewed at him with their swords and battle-axes, for do what they would, none of them could harm him, and this was regarded by all as a great honour shown to Balder. But when Loki beheld the scene he was sorely vexed that Balder was not hurt. Assuming therefore the shape of a woman, he went to Fensalir, the mansion of Frigga. That goddess, when she saw the pretended woman, inquired of her if she knew what the Æsir were doing at their meetings. She replied that they were throwing darts and stones at Balder without being able to hurt him.

"'Ay', said Frigga, 'neither metal nor wood can hurt Balder, for I have exacted an oath from all of them'.

"'What!' exclaimed the woman, 'have all things sworn to spare Balder?'

"'All things', replied Frigga, 'except one little shrub that grows on the Eastern side of Valhalla, and is called Mistletoe, and which I thought too young and feeble to crave an oath from'.

"As soon as Loki heard this he went away, and, resuming his natural shape, cut off the mistletoe, and repaired to the place where the gods were assembled. There he found Hödur standing apart, without partaking of the sports, on account of his blindness, and going up to him said, 'Why dost thou not also throw something at Balder?'

"'Because I am blind', answered Hödur, 'and see not where Balder is, and have, moreover, nothing to throw with'.

"'Come, then', said Loki, 'do like the rest, and show honour to Balder by throwing this twig at him, and I will direct thy arm toward the place where he stands'.

"Hödur then took the mistletoe, and, under the guidance of Loki, darted it at Balder, who, pierced through and through, fell down lifeless". —*Edda.*

Balder Dead

I

SENDING

So on the floor lay Balder dead ; and round
Lay thickly strewn swords, axes, darts, and spears,
Which all the Gods in sport had idly thrown
At Balder, whom no weapon pierc'd or clove ;
But in his breast stood fixt the fatal bough
Of mistletoe, which Lok the Accuser gave
To Hoder, and unwitting Hoder threw :
'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm.
And all the Gods and all the Heroes came
And stood round Balder on the bloody floor
Weeping and wailing ; and Valhalla rang
Up to its golden roofs with sobs and cries :
And on the tables stood the untasted meats,
And in the horns and gold-rimm'd skulls the wine :
And now would Night have fall'n, and found them yet.
Wailing ; but otherwise was Odin's will :
And thus the Father of the Ages spake :—
' Enough of tears, ye Gods, enough of wail !
Not to lament in was Valhalla made.
If any here might weep for Balder's death,
I most might weep, his father ; such a son
I lose to-day, so bright, so lov'd a God.
But he has met that doom, which long ago
The Nornies, when his mother bare him, spun,
And fate set seal, that so his end must be.
Balder has met his death, and ye survive :
Weep him an hour, but what can grief avail ?

For ye yourselves, ye Gods, shall meet your doom,
All ye who hear me, and inhabit Heaven,
And I too, Odin too, the Lord of all;
But ours we shall not meet, when that day comes,
With women's tears and weak complaining cries—
Why should we meet another's portion so?
Rather it fits you, having wept your hour,
With cold, dry eyes, and hearts compos'd and stern,
To live, as erst, your daily life in Heaven.
By me shall vengeance on the murderer Lok,
The foe, the accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
Be strictly car'd for, in the appointed day.
Meanwhile, to-morrow, when the morning dawns,
Bring wood to the seashore to Balder's ship,
And on the deck build high a funeral pile,
And on the top lay Balder's corpse, and put
Fire to the wood, and send him out to sea
To burn; for that is what the dead desire'.
So having spoke, the King of Gods arose,
And mounted his horse Sleipner, whom he rode,
And from the hall of Heaven he rode away
To Lidskialf, and sate upon his throne,
The mount, from whence his eye surveys the world.
And far from Heaven he turn'd his shining orbs
To look on Midgard, and the earth, and men:
And on the conjuring Lapps he bent his gaze
Whom antler'd reindeer pull over the snow;
And on the Finns, the gentlest of mankind,
Fair men, who live in holes under the ground;
Nor did he look once more to Ida's plain,
Nor tow'rd Valhalla, and the sorrowing Gods;
For well he knew the Gods would heed his word,
And cease to mourn, and think of Balder's pyre.
But in Valhalla all the Gods went back
From around Balder, all the Heroes went;

And left his body stretch'd upon the floor.
And on their golden chairs they sate again,
Beside the tables, in the hall of Heaven ;
And before each the cooks who serv'd them plac'd
New messes of the boar Serimner's flesh,
And the Valkyries crown'd their horns with mead.
So they, with pent-up hearts and tearless eyes,
Wailing no more, in silence ate and drank,
While twilight fell, and sacred night came on.
 But the blind Hoder left the feasting Gods
In Odin's hall, and went through Asgard streets,
And past the haven where the Gods have moor'd
Their ships, and through the gate, beyond the wall ;
Though sightless, yet his own mind led the God.
Down to the margin of the roaring sea .
He came, and sadly went along the sand,
Between the waves and black o'erhanging cliffs
Where in and out the screaming seafowl fly ;
Until he came to where a gully breaks
Through the cliff wall, and a fresh stream runs down
From the high moors behind, and meets the sea.
There in the glen Fensaler stands, the house
Of Frea, honour'd mother of the Gods,
And shows its lighted windows to the main.
There he went up, and pass'd the open doors ;
And in the hall he found those women old,
The prophetesses, who by rite eterne
On Frea's hearth feed high the sacred fire
Both night and day ; and by the inner wall
Upon her golden chair the Mother sate,
With folded hands, revolving things to come :
To her drew Hoder near, and spake, and said :—
 'Mother, a child of bale thou bar'st in me !
For, first, thou barest me with blinded eyes,
Sightless and helpless, wandering weak in Heaven ;

And, after that, of ignorant witless mind
Thou barest me, and unforeseeing soul;
That I alone must take the branch from Lok,
The foe, the accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
And cast it at the dear-lov'd Balder's breast
At whom the Gods in sport their weapons threw—
'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm.
Now therefore what to attempt, or whither fly,
For who will bear my hateful sight in Heaven?
Can I, O mother, bring them Balder back?
Or—for thou know'st the fates, and things allow'd—
Can I with Hela's power a compact strike,
And make exchange, and give my life for his'?
He spoke: the mother of the Gods replied:—
'Hoder, ill-fated, child of bale, my son,
Sightless in soul and eye, what words are these?
That one, long portion'd with his doom of death,
Should change his lot, and fill another's life,
And Hela yield to this, and let him go!
On Balder Death hath laid her hand, not thee;
Nor doth she count this life a price for that.
For many Gods in Heaven, not thou alone,
Would freely die to purchase Balder back,
And wend themselves to Hela's gloomy realm.
For not so gladsome is that life in Heaven
Which Gods and Heroes lead, in feast and fray,
Waiting the darkness of the final times,
That one should grudge its loss for Balder's sake,
Balder their joy, so bright, so lov'd a God.
But fate withstands, and laws forbid this way.
Yet in my secret mind one way I know,
Nor do I judge if it shall win or fail;
But much must still be tried, which shall but fail'.
And the blind Hoder answer'd her, and said:—
'What way is this, O mother, that thou show'st?

Is it a matter which a God might try' ?
And straight the mother of the Gods replied :—
'There is a road which leads to Hela's realm,
Untrodden, lonely, far from light and Heaven.
Who goes that way must take no other horse
To ride, but Sleipner, Odin's horse, alone.
Nor must he choose that common path of Gods
Which every day they come and go in Heaven,
O'er the Bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
Past Midgard fortress, down to earth and men ;
But he must tread a dark untravell'd road
Which branches from the north of Heaven, and ride
Nine days, nine nights, toward the northern ice,
Through valleys deep engulf'd, with roaring streams.
And he will reach on the tenth morn a bridge
Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
Not Bifrost, but that bridge a damsel keeps,
Who tells the passing troops of dead their way
To the low shore of ghosts, and Hela's realm.
And she will bid him northward steer his course :
Then he will journey through no lighted land,
Nor see the sun arise, nor see it set ;
But he must ever watch the northern Bear,
Who from her frozen height with jealous eye
Confronts the Dog and Hunter in the south,
And is alone not dipt in Ocean's stream.
And straight he will come down to Ocean's strand—
Ocean, whose watery ring enfolds the world,
And on whose marge the ancient giants dwell.
But he will reach its unknown northern shore,
Far, far beyond the outmost giant's home,
At the chink'd fields of ice, the waste of snow :
And he will fare across the dismal ice
Northward, until he meets a stretching wall
Barring his way, and in the wall a grate.

But then he must dismount, and on the ice
Tighten the girths of Sleipner, Odin's horse,
And make him leap the grate, and come within.
And he will see stretch round him Hela's realm,
The plains of Niflheim, where dwell the dead,
And hear the roaring streams of Hell.
And he will see the feeble, shadowy tribes,
And Balder sitting crown'd, and Hela's throne.
Then must he not regard the wailful ghosts
Who all will flit, like eddying leaves, around ;
But he must straight accost their solemn queen,
And pay her homage, and entreat with prayers,
Telling her all that grief they have in Heaven
For Balder, whom she holds by right below ;
If haply he may melt her heart with words,
And make her yield, and give him Balder back '.
She spoke ; but Hoder answer'd her and said :—
' Mother, a dreadful way is this thou show'st ;
No journey for a sightless God to go ' !
And straight the mother of the Gods replied :—
' Therefore thyself thou shalt not go, my son.
But he whom first thou meetest when thou com'st
To Asgard, and declar'st this hidden way,
Shall go ; and I will be his guide unseen '.
She spoke, and on her face let fall her veil,
And bow'd her head, and sate with folded hands,
But at the central hearth those women old,
Who while the Mother spake had ceased their toil,
Began again to heap the sacred fire :
And Hoder turn'd, and left his mother's house,
Fensaler, whose lit windows look to sea ;
And came again down to the roaring waves,
And back along the beach to Asgard went,
Pondering on that which Frea said should be.
But night came down, and darken'd Asgard streets.

Then from their loathéd feast the Gods arose,
And lighted torches, and took up the corpse
Of Balder from the floor of Odin's hall,
And laid it on a bier, and bare him home
Through the fast-darkening streets to his own house,
Breidablik, on whose columns Balder grav'd
The enchantments that recall the dead to life :
For wise he was, and many curious arts,
Postures of runes, and healing herbs he knew ;
Unhappy : but that art he did not know,
To keep his own life safe, and see the sun :—
There to his hall the Gods brought Balder home,
And each bespake him as he laid him down :—
'Would that ourselves, O Balder, we were borne
Home to our halls, with torchlight, by our kin,
So thou might'st live, and still delight the Gods'.
They spake ; and each went home to his own house.
But there was one, the first of all the Gods
For speed, and Hermod was his name in Heaven ;
Most fleet he was, but now he went the last,
Heavy in heart for Balder, to his house,
Which he in Asgard built him, there to dwell,
Against the harbour, by the city wall :
Him the blind Hoder met, as he came up
From the sea cityward, and knew his step ;
Nor yet could Hermod see his brother's face,
For it grew dark ; but Hoder touch'd his arm :
And as a spray of honeysuckle flowers
Brushes across a tired traveller's face
Who shuffles through the deep dew-moisten'd dust,
On a May evening, in the darken'd lanes,
And starts him, that he thinks a ghost went by—
So Hoder brush'd by Hermod's side, and said :—
'Take Sleipner, Hermod, and set forth with dawn
To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back ;

And they shall be thy guides, who have the power'.
He spake, and brush'd soft by, and disappear'd.
And Hermod gazed into the night, and said :—
'Who is it utters through the dark his hest
So quickly, and will wait for no reply ?
The voice was like the unhappy Hoder's voice.
Howbeit I will see, and do his hest ;
For there rang note divine in that command'.
So speaking, the fleet-footed Hermod came
Home, and lay down to sleep in his own house ;
And all the Gods lay down in their own homes.
And Hoder too came home, distraught with grief,
Loathing to meet, at dawn, the other Gods ;
And he went in, and shut the door, and fixt
His sword upright, and fell on it, and died.
But from the hill of Lidskialf Odin rose,
The throne, from which his eye surveys the world;
And mounted Sleipner, and in darkness rode
To Asgard. And the stars came out in heaven,
High over Asgard, to light home the King.
But fiercely Odin gallop'd, mov'd in heart ;
And swift to Asgard, to the gate, he came :
And terribly the hoofs of Sleipner rang
Along the flinty floor of Asgard streets,
And the Gods trembled on their golden beds
Hearing the wrathful Father coming home—
For dread, for like a whirlwind, Odin came :
And to Valhalla's gate he rode, and left
Sleipner ; and Sleipner went to his own stall ;
And in Valhalla Odin laid him down.
But in Breidablik Nanna, Balder's wife,
Came with the Goddesses who wrought her will,
And stood by Balder lying on his bier :
And at his head and feet she station'd Scalds
Who in their lives were famous for their song ;

These o'er the corpse inton'd a plaintive strain,
A dirge ; and Nanna and her train replied.
And far into the night they wail'd their dirge :
But when their souls were satisfied with wail,
They went, and laid them down, and Nanna went
Into an upper chamber, and lay down ;
And Frea seal'd her tired lids with sleep.
And 'twas when night is bordering hard on dawn,
When air is chilliest, and the stars sunk low ;
Then Balder's spirit through the gloom drew near,
In garb, in form, in feature as he was,
Alive, and still the rays were round his head
Which were his glorious mark in Heaven ; he stood
Over against the curtain of the bed,
And gaz'd on Nanna as she slept, and spake :—
'Poor lamb, thou sleepest, and forgett'st thy woe.
Tears stand upon the lashes of thine eyes,
Tears wet the pillow by thy cheek ; but thou,
Like a young child, hast cried thyself to sleep.
Sleep on : I watch thee, and am here to aid.
Alive I kept not far from thee, dear soul,
Neither do I neglect thee now, though dead.
For with to-morrow's dawn the Gods prepare
To gather wood, and build a funeral pile
Upon my ship, and burn my corpse with fire,
That sad, sole honour of the dead ; and thee
They think to burn, and all my choicest wealth,
With me, for thus ordains the common rite :
But it shall not be so : but mild, but swift,
But painless shall a stroke from Frea come,
To cut thy thread of life, and free thy soul,
And they shall burn thy corpse with mine, not thee.
And well I know that by no stroke of death,
Tardy or swift, wouldst thou be loath to die,
So it restored thee, Nanna, to my side,

Whom thou so well hast lov'd ; but I can smooth
Thy way, and this, at least, my prayers avail.
Yes, and I fain would altogether ward
Death from thy head, and with the Gods in Heaven
Prolong thy life, though not by thee desir'd :
But right bars this, not only thy desire.
Yet dreary, Nanna, is the life they lead
In that dim world, in Hela's mouldering realm ;
And doleful are the ghosts, the troops of dead,
Whom Hela with austere control presides ;
For of the race of Gods is no one there,
Save me alone, and Hela, solemn queen ;
And all the nobler souls of mortal men
On battle-field have met their death, and now
Feast in Valhalla, in my father's hall ;
Only the inglorious sort are there below,
The old, the cowards, and the weak are there—
Men spent by sickness, or obscure decay.
But even there, O Nanna, we might find
Some solace in each other's look and speech,
Wandering together through that gloomy world,
And talking of the life we led in Heaven,
While we yet lived, among the other Gods '.
He spake, and straight his lineaments began
To fade ; and Nanna in her sleep stretch'd out
Her arms towards him with a cry ; but he
Mournfully shook his head, and disappear'd.
And as the woodman sees a little smoke
Hang in the air, afield, and disappear—
So Balder faded in the night away.
And Nanna on her bed sunk back ; but then
Frea, the mother of the Gods, with stroke
Painless and swift, set free her airy soul,
Which took, on Balder's track, the way below ;
And instantly the sacred morn appear'd.

II

JOURNEY TO THE DEAD

FORTH from the east, up the ascent of Heaven,
Day drove his courser with the shining mane ;
And in Valhalla, from his gable perch,
The golden-crested cock began to crow :
Hereafter, in the blackest dead of night,
With shrill and dismal cries that bird shall crow,
Warning the Gods that foes draw nigh to Heaven ;
But now he crew at dawn, a cheerful note,
To wake the Gods and Heroes to their tasks.
And all the Gods, and all the Heroes, woke.
And from their beds the Heroes rose, and donn'd
Their arms, and led their horses from the stall,
And mounted them, and in Valhalla's court
Were rang'd ; and then the daily fray began.
And all day long they there are hack'd and hewn,
'Mid dust, and groans, and limbs lopp'd off, and blood ;
But all at night return to Odin's hall,
Woundless and fresh ; such lot is theirs in Heaven.
And the Valkyries on their steeds went forth
Toward earth and fights of men ; and at their side
Skulda, the youngest of the Nornies, rode ;
And over Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
Past Midgard fortress, down to earth they came ;
There through some battle-field, where men fall fast,
Their horses fetlock-deep in blood, they ride,
And pick the bravest warriors out for death,
Whom they bring back with them at night to Heaven,
To glad the Gods, and feast in Odin's hall.
But the Gods went not now, as otherwhile,
Into the tilt-yard, where the Heroes fought,
To feast their eyes with looking on the fray ;
Nor did they to their judgement-place repair

By the ash Igdrasil, in Ida's plain,
Where they hold council, and give laws for men :
But they went, Odin first, the rest behind,
To the hall Gladheim, which is built of gold ;
Where are in circle rang'd twelve golden chairs,
And in the midst one higher, Odin's throne :
There all the Gods in silence sate them down ;
And thus the Father of the ages spake :—
'Go quickly, Gods, bring wood to the seashore,
With all which it beseems the dead to have,
And make a funeral pile on Balder's ship ;
On the twelfth day the Gods shall burn his corpse.
But Hermod, thou, take Sleipner, and ride down
To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back'.
So said he ; and the Gods arose, and took
Axes and ropes, and at their head came Thor,
Shouldering his hammer, which the giants know :
Forth wended they, and drave their steeds before :
And up the dewy mountain-tracks they far'd
To the dark forests, in the early dawn ;
And up and down, and side and slant they roam'd :
And from the glens all day an echo came
Of crushing falls ; for with his hammer Thor
Smote 'mid the rocks the lichen-bearded pines,
And burst their roots, while to their tops the Gods
Made fast the woven ropes, and hal'd them down,
And lopp'd their boughs, and clove them on the sward,
And bound the logs behind their steeds to draw,
And drave them homeward ; and the snorting steeds
Went straining through the crackling brushwood down
And by the darkling forest paths the Gods
Follow'd, and on their shoulders carried boughs.
And they came out upon the plain, and pass'd
Asgard, and led their horses to the beach,
And loos'd them of their loads on the seashore,

And rang'd the wood in stacks by Balder's ship ;
And every God went home to his own house.
But when the Gods were to the forest gone,
Hermod led Sleipner from Valhalla forth
And saddled him ; before that, Sleipner brook'd
No meaner hand than Odin's on his mane,
On his broad back no lesser rider bore ;
Yet docile now he stood at Hermod's side,
Arching his neck, and glad to be bestrode,
Knowing the God they went to seek, how dear.
But Hermod mounted him, and sadly far'd
In silence up the dark untravell'd road
Which branches from the north of Heaven, and went
All day ; and daylight wan'd, and night came on.
And all that night he rode, and journey'd so,
Nine days, nine nights, towards the northern ice,
Through valleys deep-engulf'd, by roaring streams.
And on the tenth morn he beheld the bridge
Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
And on the bridge a damsel watching arm'd,
In the straight passage, at the farther end,
Where the road issues between walling rocks.
Scant space that warder left for passers by ;
But as when cowherds in October drive
Their kine across a snowy mountain pass
To winter pasture on the southern side,
And on the ridge a waggon chokes the way,
Wedg'd in the snow ; then painfully the hinds
With goad and shouting urge their cattle past,
Plunging through deep untrodden banks of snow
To right and left, and warm steam fills the air—
So on the bridge that damsel block'd the way,
And question'd Hermod as he came, and said :—
'Who art thou on thy black and fiery horse
Under whose hoofs the bridge o'er Giall's stream

Rumbles and shakes ? Tell me thy race and home.
But yestermorn, five troops of dead pass'd by,
Bound on their way below to Hela's realm,
Nor shook the bridge so much as thou alone.
And thou hast flesh and colour on thy cheeks,
Like men who live and draw the vital air ;
Nor look'st thou pale and wan, like men deceas'd,
Souls bound below, my daily passers here '.
And the fleet-footed Hermod answer'd her :—
' O damsel, Hermod am I call'd, the son
Of Odin ; and my high-roof'd house is built
Far hence, in Asgard, in the city of Gods ;
And Sleipner, Odin's horse, is this I ride.
And I come, sent this road on Balder's track ;
Say then, if he hath cross'd thy bridge or no ?'
He spake ; the warder of the bridge replied :—
' O Hermod, rarely do the feet of Gods
Or of the horses of the Gods resound
Upon my bridge ; and, when they cross, I know.
Balder hath gone this way, and ta'en the road
Below there, to the north, toward Hela's realm.
From here the cold white mist can be discern'd,
Nor lit with sun, but through the darksome air
By the dim vapour-blotted light of stars,
Which hangs over the ice where lies the road.
For in that ice are lost those northern streams,
Freezing and ridging in their onward flow,
Which from the fountain of Vergelmer run,
The spring that bubbles up by Hela's throne.
There are the joyless seats, the haunt of ghosts,
Hela's pale swarms ; and there was Balder bound.
Ride on ; pass free : but he by this is there '.
She spake, and stepp'd aside, and left him room,
And Hermod greeted her, and gallop'd by
Across the bridge ; then she took post again.

But northward Hermod rode, the way below ;
And o'er a darksome tract, which knows no sun.
But by the blotted light of stars, he far'd.
And he came down to Ocean's northern strand
At the drear ice, beyond the giants' home :
Thence on he journey'd o'er the fields of ice
Still north, until he met a stretching wall
Barring his way, and in the wall a grate.
Then he dismounted, and drew tight the girths,
On the smooth ice, of Sleipnér, Odin's horse,
And made him leap the grate, and came within.
And he beheld spread round him Hela's realm,
The plains of Niflheim, where dwell the dead,
And heard the thunder of the streams of Hell.
For near the wall the river of Roaring flows,
Outmost ; the others near the centre run—
The Storm, the Abyss, the Howling, and the Pain ;
These flow by Hela's throne, and near their spring.
And from the dark flock'd up the shadowy tribes :
And as the swallows crowd the bulrush-beds
Of some clear river, issuing from a lake,
On autumn days, before they cross the sea ;
And to each bulrush-crest a swallow hangs
Swinging, and others skim the river streams,
And their quick twittering fills the banks and shores—
So around Hermod swarm'd the twittering ghosts.
Women, and infants, and young men who died
Too soon for fame, with white ungraven shields ;
And old men, known to glory, but their star
Betray'd them, and of wasting age they died,
Not wounds ; yet, dying, they their armour wore,
And now have chief regard in Hela's realm.
Behind flock'd wrangling up a piteous crew,
Greeted of none, disfeatur'd and forlorn—
Cowards, who were in sloughs interr'd alive ;

And round them still the wattled hurdles hung,
Wherewith they stamp'd them down, and trod them deep,
To hide their shameful memory from men.
But all he pass'd unhail'd, and reach'd the throne
Of Hela, and saw, near it, Balder, crown'd,
And Hela sat thereon, with countenance stern,
And thus bespake him first the solemn queen :—
'Unhappy, how hast thou endur'd to leave
The light, and journey to the cheerless land
Where idly flit about the feeble shades ?
How didst thou cross the bridge o'er Giall's stream,
Being alive, and come to Ocean's shore ?
Or how o'erleap the grate that bars the wall ' ?
She spake : but down off Sleipner Hermod sprang,
And fell before her feet, and clasp'd her knees ;
And spake, and mild entreated her, and said :—
'O Hela, wherefore should the Gods declare
Their errands to each other, or the ways
They go ? the errand and the way is known.
Thou know'st, thou know'st, what grief we have in Heaven
For Balder, whom thou hold'st by right below :
Restore him, for what part fulfils he here ?
Shall he shed cheer over the cheerless seats,
And touch the apathetic ghosts with joy ?
Not for such end, O queen, thou hold'st thy realm.
For Heaven was Balder born, the city of Gods
And Heroes, where they live in light and joy :
Thither restore him, for his place is there '.
He spoke ; and grave replied the solemn queen :—
'Hermod, for he thou art, thou son of Heaven !
A strange unlikely errand, sure, is thine.
Do the Gods send to me to make them blest ?
Small bliss my race hath of the Gods obtain'd.
Three mighty children to my father Lok]
Did Angerbode, the giantess, bring forth—

Fenris the wolf, the Serpent huge, and me.
Of these the Serpent in the sea ye cast,
Who since in your despite hath wax'd amain,
And now with gleaming ring enfolds the world ;
Me on this cheerless nether world ye threw,
And gave me nine unlighted realms to rule ;
While on his island in the lake afar,
Made fast to the bor'd crag, by wile not strength
Subdu'd, with limber chains lives Fenris bound.
Lok still subsists in Heaven, our father wise,
Your mate, though loath'd, and feasts in Odin's hall ;
But him too foes await, and netted snares,
And in a cave a bed of needle rocks,
And o'er his visage serpents dropping gall.
Yet he shall one day rise, and burst his bonds,
And with himself set us his offspring free,
When he guides Muspel's children to their bourne.
Till then in peril or in pain we live,
Wrought by the Gods : and ask the Gods our aid ?
Howbeit, we abide our day ; till then,
We do not, as some feebler haters do,
Seek to afflict our foes with petty pangs,
Helpless to better us, or ruin them.
Come then ; if Balder was so dear belov'd,
And this is true, and such a loss is Heaven's—
Hear, how to Heaven may Balder be restor'd.
Show me through all the world the signs of grief :
Fails but one thing to grieve, here Balder stops :
Let all that lives and moves upon the earth
Weep him, and all that is without life weep ;
Let Gods, men, brutes, beweep him ; plants and stones.
So shall I know the lost was dear indeed,
And bend my heart, and give him back to Heaven '.
She spake ; and Hermod answer'd her, and said :—
' Hela, such as thou say'st, the terms shall be.

But come, declare me this, and truly tell :
May I, ere I depart, bid Balder hail ?
Or is it here withheld to greet the dead ' ?
He spake, and straightway Hela answer'd him :—
' Hermod, greet Balder if thou wilt, and hold
Converse ; his speech remains, though he be dead '.
And straight to Balder Hermod turn'd, and spake :—
' Even in the abode of death, O Balder, hail !
Thou hear'st, if hearing, like as speech, is thine,
The terms of thy releasement hence to Heaven ;
Fear nothing but that all shall be fulfill'd.
For not unmindful of thee are the Gods,
Who see the light, and blest in Asgard dwell ;
Even here they seek thee out, in Hela's realm.
And sure of all the happiest far art thou
Who ever have been known in earth or Heaven ;
Alive, thou wert of Gods the most belov'd,
And now thou sittest crown'd by Hela's side,
Here, and hast honour among all the dead.'
He spake ; and Balder utter'd him reply,
But feebly, as a voice far off ; he said :—
' Hermod the nimble, gild me not my death.
Better to live a slave, a captur'd man,
Who scatters rushes in a master's hall,
Than be a crown'd king here, and rule the dead.
And now I count not of these terms as safe
To be fulfill'd, nor my return as sure,
Though I be lov'd, and many mourn my death ;
For double minded ever was the seed
Of Lok, and double are the gifts they give.
Howbeit, report thy message ; and therewith,
To Odin, to my father, take this ring,
Memorial of me, whether sav'd or no ;
And tell the Heaven-born Gods how thou hast seen
Me sitting here below by Hela's side,

Crown'd, having honour among all the dead .
He spake, and rais'd his hand, and gave the ring.
And with inscrutable regard the queen
Of Hell beheld them, and the ghosts stood dumb.
But Hermod took the ring, and yet once more
Kneel'd and did homage to the solemn queen ;
Then mounted Sleipner, and set forth to ride
Back, through the astonish'd tribes of dead, to Heaven.
And to the wall he came, and found the grate
Lifted, and issued on the fields of ice ;
And o'er the ice he far'd to Ocean's strand,
And up from thence, a wet and misty road,
To the arm'd damsel's bridge, and Giall's stream.
Worse was that way to go than to return,
For him : for others all return is barr'd.
Nine days he took to go, two to return ;
And on the twelfth morn saw the light of Heaven.
And as a traveller in the early dawn
To the steep edge of some great valley comes,
Through which a river flows, and sees, beneath,
Clouds of white rolling vapours fill the vale,
But o'er them, on the farther slope, descries
Vineyards, and crofts, and pastures, bright with sun—.
So Hermod, o'er the fog between, saw Heaven.
And Sleipner snorted, for he smelt the air
Of Heaven ; and mighti y, as wing'd, he flew.
And Hermod saw the towers of Asgard rise ;
And he drew near, and heard no living voice
In Asgard ; and the golden halls were dumb.
Then Hermod knew what labour held the Gods ;
And through the empty streets he rode, and pass'd
Under the gate-house to the sands, and found
The Gods on the seashore by Balder's ship.

III

FUNERAL

THE Gods held talk together, group'd in knots,
Round Balder's corpse, which they had thither borne ;
And Hermod came down towards them from the gate.
And Lok, the father of the serpent, first
Beheld him come, and to his neighbour spake :—
'See, here is Hermod, who comes single back
From Hell ; and shall I tell thee how he seems ?
Like as a farmer, who hath lost his dog,
Some morn, at market, in a crowded town—
Through many streets the poor beast runs in vain,
And follows this man after that, for hours ;
And, late at evening, spent and panting, falls
Before a stranger's threshold, not his home,
With flanks a-tremble, and his slender tongue
Hangs quivering out between his dust-smear'd jaws,
And piteously he eyes the passers by ;
But home his master comes to his own farm,
Far in the country, wondering where he is—
So Hermod comes to-day unfollow'd home'.
And straight his neighbour, mov'd with wrath, replied :—
'Deceiver, fair in form, but false in heart !
Enemy, mocker, whom, though Gods, we hate—
Peace, lest our father Odin hear thee gibe !
Would I might see him snatch thee in his hand,
And bind thy carcase, like a bale, with cords,
And hurl thee in a lake, to sink or swim !
If clear from plotting Balder's death, to swim ;
But deep, if thou devisedst it, to drown,
And perish, against fate, before thy day ! '
So they two soft to one another spake.
But Odin look'd toward the land, and saw
His messenger ; and he stood forth, and cried :

And Hermod came, and leapt from Sleipner down,
And in his father's hand put Sleipner's rein,
And greeted Odin and the Gods, and said :—
'Odin, my father, and ye, Gods of Heaven!
Lo, home, having perform'd your will, I come.
Into the joyless kingdom have I been,
Below, and look'd upon the shadowy tribes
Of ghosts, and communed with their solemn queen ;
And to your prayer she sends you this reply :
Show her through all the world the signs of grief :
Fails but one thing to grieve, there Balder stops.
Let Gods, men, brutes, beweep him ; plants and stones :
So shall she know your loss was dear indeed,
And bend her heart, and give you Balder back'.
He spoke ; and all the Gods to Odin look'd ;
And straight the Father of the ages said :—
'Ye Gods, these terms may keep another day.
But now, put on your arms, and mount your steeds
And in procession all come near, and weep
Balder ; for that is what the dead desire.
When ye enough have wept, then build a pile
Of the heap'd wood, and burn his corpse with fire
Out of our sight ; that we may turn from grief,
And lead, as erst, our daily life in Heaven'.
He spoke, and the Gods arm'd ; and Odin donn'd
His dazzling corslet and his helm of gold,
And led the way on Sleipner ; and the rest
Follow'd, in tears, their father and their king.
And thrice in arms around the dead they rode,
Weeping ; the sands were wetted, and their arms,
With their thick-falling tears : so good a friend
They mourn'd that day, so bright, so lov'd a God.
And Odin came, and laid his kingly hands
On Balder's breast, and thus began the wail :—
'Farewell, O Balder, bright and loved, my son!

In that great day, the twilight of the Gods,
When Muspel's children shall beleaguer Heaven,
Then we shall miss thy counsel and thy arm '.
Thou camest near the next, O warrior Thor!
Shouldering thy hammer, in thy chariot drawn,
Swaying the long-hair'd goats with silver'd rein;
And over Balder's corpse these words didst say:—
' Brother, thou dwellest in the darksome land,
And talkest with the feeble tribes of ghosts,
Now, and I know not how they prize thee there,
But here, I know, thou wilt be miss'd and mourn'd.
For haughty spirits and high wraths are rife
Among the Gods and Heroes here in Heaven,
As among those whose joy and work is war;
And daily strifes arise, and angry words:
But from thy lips, O Balder, night or day,
Hears no one ever an injurious word
To God or Hero, but thou keptest back
The others, labouring to compose their brawls.
Be ye then kind, as Balder too was kind!
For we lose him, who smooth'd all strife in Heaven '.
He spake: and all the Gods assenting wail'd.
And Freya next came nigh, with golden tears;
The loveliest Goddess she in Heaven, by all
Most honour'd after Frea, Odin's wife:
Her long ago the wandering Oder took
To mate, but left her to roam distant lands;
Since then she seeks him, and weeps tears of gold:
Names hath she many; Vanadis on earth
They call her, Freya is her name in Heaven;
She in her hands took Balder's head, and spake:
' Balder, my brother, thou art gone a road
Unknown and long, and haply on that way
My long-lost wandering Oder thou hast met,
For in the paths of Heaven he is not found.

Oh, if it be so, tell him what thou wert
To his neglected wife, and what he is,
And wring his heart with shame, to hear thy word.
For he, my husband, left me here to pine,
Not long a wife, when his unquiet heart
First drove him from me into distant lands.
Since then I vainly seek him through the world,
And weep from shore to shore my golden tears,
But neither god nor mortal heeds my pain.
Thou only, Balder, wast for ever kind,
To take my hand, and wipe my tears, and say :
Weep not, O Freya, weep no golden tears!
One day the wandering Oder will return,
Or thou wilt find him in thy faithful search
On some great road, or resting in an inn,
Or at a ford, or sleeping by a tree.
So Balder said ;—but Oder, well I know,
My truant Oder I shall see no more
To the world's end ; and Balder now is gone,
And I am left uncomforted in Heaven '.
She spake ; and all the Goddesses bewail'd.
Last, from among the Heroes one came near,
No God, but of the hero-troop the chief—
Regner, who swept the northern sea with fleets,
And ruled o'er Denmark and the heathy isles,
Living ; but Ella captur'd him and slew ;—
A king whose fame then fill'd the vast of Heaven,
Now time obscures it, and men's later deeds :
He last approach'd the corpse, and spake, and said :—
' Balder, there yet are many Scalds in Heaven
Still left, and that chief Scald, thy brother Brage,
Whom we may bid to sing, though thou art gone :
And all these gladly, while we drink, we hear,
After the feast is done, in Odin's hall ;
But they harp ever on one string, and wake

Remembrance in our soul of wars alone,
Such as on earth we valiantly have wag'd,
And blood, and ringing blows, and violent death :
But when thou sangest, Balder, thou didst strike
Another note, and, like a bird in spring,
Thy voice of joyance minded us, and youth,
And wife, and children, and our ancient home.
Yes, and I, too, remember'd then no more
My dungeon, where the serpents stung me dead,
Nor Ella's victory on the English coast ;
But I heard Thora laugh in Gothland Isle,
And saw my shepherdess, Aslauga, tend
Her flock along the white Norwegian beach :
Tears started to mine eyes with yearning joy :
Therefore with grateful heart I mourn thee dead '.
So Regner spake, and all the Heroes groan'd.
But now the sun had pass'd the height of Heaven,
And soon had all that day been spent in wail ;
But then the Father of the ages said :—
' Ye Gods, there well may be too much of wail.
Bring now the gather'd wood to Balder's ship ;
Heap on the deck the logs, and build the pyre '.
But when the Gods and Heroes heard, they brought
The wood to Balder's ship, and built a pile,
Full the deck's breadth, and lofty ; then the corpse
Of Balder on the highest top they laid,
With Nanna on his right, and on his left
Hoder, his brother, whom his own hand slew.
And they set jars of wine and oil to lean
Against the bodies, and stuck torches near,
Splinters of pine-wood, soak'd with turpentine ;
And brought his arms and gold, and all his stuff,
And slew the dogs who at his table fed,
And his horse, Balder's horse, whom most he lov'd,
And placed them on the pyre, and Odin threw

A last choice gift thereon, his golden ring.
They fixt the mast, and hoisted up the sails,
Then they put fire to the wood ; and Thor
Set his stout shoulder hard against the stern
To push the ship through the thick sand : sparks flew
From the deep trench she plough'd—so strong a God
Furrow'd it—and the water gurgled in.
And the ship floated on the waves, and rock'd.
But n the hills a strong east-wind arose,
And came down moaning to the sea ; first squalls
Ran black o'er the sea's face, then steady rush'd
The breeze, and fill'd the sails, and blew the fire.
And wreath'd in smoke the ship stood out to sea.
Soon with a roaring rose the mighty fire,
And the pile crackled ; and between the logs
Sharp quivering tongues of flame shot out, and leapt
Curling and darting, higher, until they lick'd
The summit of the pile, the dead, the mast,
And ate the shrivelling sails ; but still the ship
Drove on, ablaze above her hull with fire.
And the Gods stood upon the beach, and gaz'd :
And while they gaz'd, the sun went lurid down
Into the smoke-wrapt sea, and night came on.
Then the wind fell, with night, and there was calm ;
But through the dark they watch'd the burning ship
Still carried o'er the distant waters on,
Farther and farther, like an eye of fire.
And as in the dark night a travelling man
Who bivouacs in a forest 'mid the hills,
Sees suddenly a spire of flame shoot up
Out of the black waste forest, far below,
Which wood-cutters have lighted near their lodge
Against the wolves ; and all night long it flares :—
So flar'd, in the far darkness, Balder's pyre.
But fainter, as the stars rose high, it burn'd ;

The bodies were consum'd, ash chok'd the pile.
And as, in a decaying winter-fire,
A charr'd log, falling, makes a shower of sparks—
So with a shower of sparks the pile fell in,
Reddening the sea around ; and all was dark.
But the Gods went by starlight up the shore
To Asgard, and sate down in Odin's hall
At table, and the funeral-feast began.
All night they ate the boar Serimner's flesh,
And from their horns, with silver rimm'd, drank mead,
Silent, and waited for the sacred morn.
And morning over all the world was spread.
Then from their loathéd feast the Gods arose,
And took their horses, and set forth to ride
O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
To the ash Igdrasil, and Ida's plain ;
Thor came on foot, the rest on horseback rode.
And they found Mimir sitting by his fount
Of wisdom, which beneath the ashtree springs ;
And saw the Nornies watering the roots
Of that world-shadowing tree with honey-dew :
There came the Gods, and sate them down on stones ;
And thus the Father of the ages said :—
'Ye Gods, the terms ye know, which Hermod brought.
Accept them or reject them ; both have grounds.
Accept them, and they bind us, unfulfill'd,
To leave for ever Balder in the grave,
An unrecover'd prisoner, shade with shades.
But how, ye say, should the fulfilment fail ?—
Smooth sound the terms, and light to be fulfill'd ;
For dear-beloved was Balder while he liv'd
In Heaven and earth, and who would grudge him tear
But from the traitorous seed of Lok they come,
These terms, and I suspect some hidden fraud.
Bethink ye, Gods, is there no other way ?

Speak, were not this a way, the way for Gods ?
If I, if Odin, clad in radiant arms,
Mounted on Sleipner, with the warrior Thor
Drawn in his car beside me, and my sons,
All the strong brood of Heaven, to swell my train,
Should make irruption into Hela's realm,
And set the fields of gloom ablaze with light,
And bring in triumph Balder back to Heaven ? '
He spake, and his fierce sons applauded loud.
But Frea, mother of the Gods, arose,
Daughter and wife of Odin ; thus she said :—
' Odin, thou whirlwind, what a threat is this !
Thou threatenest what transcends thy might, even thine.
For of all powers the mightiest far art thou,
Lord over men on earth, and Gods in Heaven ;
Yet even from thee thyself hath been withheld
One thing—to undo what thou thyself hast rul'd.
For all which hath been fixt, was fixt by thee :
In the beginning, ere the Gods were born,
Before the Heavens were builded, thou didst slay
The giant Ymir, whom the abyss brought forth,
Thou and thy brethren fierce, the sons of Bor,
And cast his trunk to choke the abysmal void :
But of his flesh and members thou didst build
The earth and Ocean, and above them Heaven :
And from the flaming world, where Muspel reigns,
Thou sent'st and fetched'st fire, and madest lights,
Sun, moon, and stars, which thou hast hung in Heaven,
Dividing clear the paths of night and day :
And Asgard thou didst build, and Midgard fort ;
Then me thou mad'st ; of us the Gods were born :
Last, walking by the sea, thou foundest spars
Of wood, and framed'st men, who till the earth,
Or on the sea, the field of pirates, sail :
And all the race of Ymir thou didst drown,

Save one, Bergelmer; he on shipboard fled
Thy deluge, and from him the giants sprang;
But all that brood thou hast remov'd far off,
And set by Ocean's utmost marge to dwell;
But Hela into Niflheim thou threw'st,
And gave her nine unlighted worlds to rule,
A queen, and empire over all the dead.
That empire wilt thou now invade, light up
Her darkness, from her grasp a subject tear?—
Try it; but I for one, will not applaud.
Nor do I merit, Odin, thou should'st slight
Me and my words, though thou be first in Heaven;
For I too am a Goddess, born of thee,
Thine eldest, and of me the Gods are sprung;
And all that is to come I know, but lock
In mine own breast, and have to none reveal'd.
Come then; since Hela holds by right her prey,
But offers terms for his release to Heaven,
Accept the chance;—thou canst no more obtain.
Send through the world thy messengers; entreat
All living and unliving things to weep
For Balder; if thou haply thus may'st melt
Hela, and win the loved one back to Heaven'.
She spake, and on her face let fall her veil,
And bow'd her head, and sate with folded hands.
Nor did the all-ruling Odin slight her word;
Straightway he spake, and thus address'd the Gods:
'Go quickly forth through all the world, and pray
All living and unliving things to weep
Balder, if haply he may thus be won'.
When the Gods heard, they straight arose, and took
Their horses, and rode forth through all the world.
North, south, east, west, they struck, and roam'd the world,
Entreating all things to weep Balder's death:

And all that lived, and all without life, wept.
And as in winter, when the frost breaks up,
At winter's end, before the spring begins,
And a warm west-wind blows, and thaw sets in—
After an hour a dripping sound is heard
In all the forests, and the soft-strewn snow
Under the trees is dibbled thick with holes,
And from the boughs the snowloads shuffle down ;
And, in fields sloping to the south, dark plots
Of grass peep out amid surrounding snow,
And widen, and the peasant's heart is glad—
So through the world was heard a dripping noise
Of all things weeping to bring Balder back ;
And there fell joy upon the Gods to hear.
 But Hermod rode with Niord, whom he took
To show him spits and beaches of the sea
Far off, where some unwarn'd might fail to weep—
Niord, the God of storms, whom fishers know ;
Not born in Heaven ; he was in Vanheim rear'd,
With men, but lives a hostage with the Gods ;
He knows each frith, and every rocky creek
Fringed with dark pines, and sands where seafowl scream :—
They two scour'd every coast, and all things wept.
And they rode home together, through the wood
Of Jarnvid, which to east of Midgard lies
Bordering the giants, where the trees are iron ;
There in the wood before a cave they came,
Where sate, in the cave's mouth, a skinny hag,
Toothless and old ; she gibes the passers by :
Thok is she call'd, but now Lok wore her shape ;
She greeted them the first, and laugh'd, and said :—
 'Ye Gods, good lack, is it so dull in Heaven,
That ye come pleasuring to Thok's iron wood ?
Lovers of change ye are, fastidious sprites.

Look, as in some boor's yard a sweet-breath'd cow,
Whose manger is stuff'd full of good fresh hay,
Snuffs at it daintily, and stoops her head
To chew the straw, her litter, at her feet—
So ye grow squeamish, Gods, and sniff at Heaven '.
She spake; but Hermod answer'd her and said:
' Thok, not for gibes we come, we come for tears.
Balder is dead, and Hela holds her prey,
But will restore, if all things give him tears.
Begrudge not thine! to all was Balder dear '.
Then, with a louder laugh, the hag replied :—
' Is Balder dead? and do ye come for tears?
Thok with dry eyes will weep o'er Balder's pyre.
Weep him all other things, if weep they will—
I weep him not: let Hela keep her prey '!
She spake, and to the cavern's depth she fled,
Mocking: and Hermod knew their toil was vain.
And as seafaring men, who long have wrought
In the great deep for gain, at last come home,
And towards evening see the headlands rise
Of their own country, and can clear descry
A fire of wither'd furze which boys have lit
Upon the cliffs, or smoke of burning weeds
Out of a till'd field inland;—then the wind
Catches them, and drives out again to sea;
And they go long days tossing up and down
Over the grey sea-ridges, and the glimpse
Of port they had makes bitterer far their toil—
So the Gods' cross was bitterer for their joy.
Then sad at heart, to Niord Hermod spake :—
' It is the accuser Lok, who flouts us all.
Ride back, and tell in Heaven this heavy news;
I must again below, to Hela's realm '.
He spoke; and Niord set forth back to Heaven.
But Northward Hermod rode, the way below,

The way he knew ; and travers'd Giall's stream,
And down to Ocean grop'd, and cross'd the ice,
And came beneath the wall, and found the grate
Still lifted ; well was his return foreknown.
And once more Hermod saw around him spread
The joyless plains, and heard the streams of Hell.
But as he enter'd, on the extremest bound
Of Niflheim, he saw one ghost come near,
Hovering, and stopping oft, as if afraid—
Hoder, the unhappy, whom his own hand slew :
And Hermod look'd, and knew his brother's ghost,
And call'd him by his name, and sternly said :—
'Hoder, ill-fated, blind in heart and eyes !
Why tarriest thou to plunge thee in the gulf
Of the deep inner gloom, but flittest here,
In twilight, on the lonely verge of Hell,
Far from the other ghosts, and Hela's throne ?
Doubtless thou fearest to meet Balder's voice,
Thy brother, whom through folly thou didst slay'.
He spoke ; but Hoder answer'd him, and said :—
'Hermod the nimble, dost thou still pursue
The unhappy with reproach, even in the grave ?
For this I died, and fled beneath the gloom,
Not daily to endure abhorring Gods,
Nor with a hateful presence cumber Heaven—
And canst thou not, even here, pass pitying by ?
No less than Balder have I lost the sight
O Heaven, and communion with my kin ;
I too had once a wife, and once a child,
And substance, and a golden house in Heaven—
But all I left of my own act, and fled
Below, and dost thou hate me even here ?
Balder upbraids me not, nor hates at all,
Though he has cause, have any cause ; but he,
When that with downcast looks I thither came,

Stretch'd forth his hand, and with benignant voice,
Welcome, he said, *if there be welcome here,*
Brother and fellow-sport of Lok with me!
And not to offend thee, Hermod, nor to force
My hated converse on thee, came I up
From the deep gloom, where I will now return;
But earnestly I long'd to hover near,
Not too far off, when that thou camest by;
To feel the presence of a brother God,
And hear the passage of a horse of Heaven,
For the last time: for here thou com'st no more'.
He spake, and turn'd to go to the inner gloom.
But Hermod stay'd him with mild words, and said:—
'Thou doest well to chide me, Hoder blind.
Truly thou say'st, the planning guilty mind
Was Lok's; the unwitting hand alone was thine.
But Gods are like the sons of men in this—
When they have woe, they blame the nearest cause,
Howbeit stay, and be appeas'd; and tell—
Sits Balder still in pomp by Hela's side,
Or is he mingled with the unnumber'd dead'?
And the blind Hoder answer'd him and spake:—
'His place of state remains by Hela's side,
But empty; for his wife, for Nanna came
Lately below, and join'd him; and the pair
Frequent the still recesses of the realm
Of Hela, and hold converse undisturb'd.
But they too, doubtless, will have breath'd the balm,
Which floats before a visitant from Heaven,
And have drawn upward to this verge of Hell'.
He spake; and, as he ceas'd, a puff of wind
Roll'd heavily the leaden mist aside
Round where they stood, and they beheld two forms
Make towards them o'er the stretching cloudy plain.
And Hermod straight perceiv'd them, who they were

Balder and Nanna ; and to Balder said :—
' Balder, too truly thou foresaw'st a snare.
Lok triumphs still, and Hela keeps her prey.
No more to Asgard shalt thou come, nor lodge
In thy own house, Breidablik, nor enjoy
The love all bear toward thee, nor train up
Forset, thy son, to be belov'd like thee.
Here must thou lie, and wait an endless age.
Therefore for the last time, O Balder, hail ' !
He spake ; and Balder answer'd him, and said :—
' Hail and farewell ! for here thou com'st no more.
Yet mourn not for me, Hermod, when thou sitt'st
In Heaven, nor let the other Gods lament,
As wholly to be pitied, quite forlorn.
For Nanna hath rejoin'd me, who, of old,
In Heaven, was seldom parted from my side ;
And still the acceptance follows me, which crown'd
My former life, and cheers me even here.
The iron frown of Hela is relax'd
When I draw nigh, and the wan tribes of dead
Trust me, and gladly bring for my award
Their ineffectual feuds and feeble hates,
Shadows of hates, but they distress them still '.
And the fleet-footed Hermod made reply :—
' Thou hast then all the solace death allows,
Esteem and function ; and so far is well.
Yet here thou liest, Balder, underground,
Rusting for ever ; and the years roll on,
The generations pass, the ages grow,
And bring us nearer to the final day
When from the south shall march the fiery band
And cross the bridge of Heaven, with Lok for guide,
And Fenris at his heel with broken chain ;
While from the east the giant Rymer steers
His ship, and the great serpent makes to land ;

And all are marshall'd in one flaming square
Against the Gods, upon the plains of Heaven,
I mourn thee, that thou canst not help us then '.
He spake; but Balder answer'd him, and said :—
' Mourn not for me! Mourn, Hermod, for the Gods;
Mourn for the men on earth, the Gods in Heaven,
Who live, and with their eyes shall see that day.
The day will come, when Asgard's towers shall fall,
And Odin, and his sons, the seed of Heaven;
But what were I, to save them in that hour?
If strength might save them, could not Odin save,
My father, and his pride, the warrior Thor,
Vidar the silent, the impetuous Tyr?
I, what were I, when these can nought avail?
Yet doubtless, when the day of battle comes,
And the two hosts are marshall d, and in Heaven
The golden-crested cock shall sound alarm,
And his black brother-bird from hence reply,
And bucklers clash, and spears begin to pour—
Longing will stir within my breast, though vain.
But not to me so grievous, as, I know,
To other Gods it were, is my enforc'd
Absence from fields where I could nothing aid;
For I am long since weary of your storm
Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life
Something too much of war and broils, which make
Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood.
Mine eyes are dizzy with the arrowy hail;
Mine ears are stunn'd with blows, and sick for calm.
Inactive therefore let me lie, in gloom,
Unarm'd, inglorious; I attend the course
O ages, and my late return to light,
In times less alien to a spirit mild,
In new-recover'd seats, the happier day '.
He spake; and the fleet Hermod thus replied :—

'Brother, what seats are these, what happier day?
Tell me, that I may ponder it when gone'.
And the ray-crowned Balder answer'd him:—
'Far to the south, beyond the blue, there spreads
Another Heaven, the boundless: no one yet
Hath reach'd it; there hereafter shall arise
The second Asgard, with another name.
Thither, when o'er this present earth and Heavens
The tempest of the latter days hath swept,
And they from sight have disappear'd, and sunk,
Shall a small remnant of the Gods repair;
Hoder and I shall join them from the grave.
There re-assembling we shall see emerge
From the bright Ocean at our feet an earth
More fresh, more verdant than the last, with fruits
Self-springing, and a seed of man preserv'd,
Who then shall live in peace, as now in war.
But we in Heaven shall find again with joy
The ruin'd palaces of Odin, seats
Familiar, halls where we have supp'd of old;
Re-enter them with wonder, never fill
Our eyes with gazing, and rebuild with tears.
And we shall tread once more the well-known plain
Of Ida, and among the grass shall find
The golden dice with which we play'd of yore;
And that will bring to mind the former life
And pastime of the Gods, the wise discourse
Of Odin, the delights of other days.
O Hermod, pray that thou mayst join us then!
Such for the future is my hope; meanwhile,
I rest the thrall of Hela, and endure
Death, and the gloom which round me even now
Thickens, and to its inner gulf recalls.
Farewell, for longer speech is not allow'd.'
He spoke, and wav'd farewell, and gave his hand

To Nanna ; and she gave their brother blind
Her hand, in turn, for guidance ; and the three
Departed o'er the cloudy plain, and soon
Faded from sight into the interior gloom.
But Hermod stood beside his drooping horse,
Mute, gazing after them in tears ; and fain,
Fain had he follow'd their receding steps,
Though they to death were bound, and he to Heaven,
Then ; but a power he could not break withheld.
And as a stork which idle boys have trapp'd,
And tied him in a yard, at autumn sees
Flocks of his kind pass flying o'er his head
To warmer lands, and coasts that keep the sun ;—
He strains to join their flight, and from his shed
Follows them with a long complaining cry—
So Hermod gazed, and yearn'd to join his kin.

At last he sigh'd, and set forth back to Heaven.

ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

I.—Balder has been killed unwittingly by Hoder, whom Lok had tricked (1-8). Odin bids the Gods and Heroes weep no more, since all things are in the hands of Fate (9-60). Hoder goes to Frea, asking if there is no way of bringing back Balder from Niflheim, the realm of Hela (61-110). Frea can only suggest that one of the Gods should journey to Niflheim, where dwell the dead, and entreat Hela to give Balder back (111-201). After the Gods have carried Balder's corpse from Valhalla to his dwelling (202-18), Hoder meeting Hermod charges him with the journey to Niflheim and then kills himself (219-52). Balder's wife, after a vision of her husband, dies quietly in her sleep (253-342).

II.—With dawn the Heroes begin their daily fray, but the Gods go to collect wood for Balder's funeral pile (1-69). Hermod makes his journey to Niflheim (70-148). Description of Niflheim and the ghosts (149-75). He delivers his message to Hela, who demands that all things in the world shall show their grief for Balder's death (176-248); after speech with Balder, who suspects the promise (249-78), he returns (279-310).

III.—When Hermod has reported the terms to Odin, the Gods and Heroes take leave of Balder's corpse (1-152), and build a pyre on Balder's ship, and set fire to his body with those of Nanna and Hoder; a wind rises and blows the ship to sea (152-218). After discussion they perforce accept the terms (219-307). All things weep for Balder, save one old hag, who is Lok in disguise (219-379). Hermod goes back to Niflheim, and speaks for the last time with Hoder and Balder (380-519). Balder prophesies after the Twilight of the Gods, the coming of a better age (520-72).

NOTES

1. So . . . Arnold commences the poem as if merely picking up the thread of a continuous story at the point where it had been dropped. The preceding events are narrated in his quotation from the *Edda* (p. 74). Compare the opening of *Sohrab and Rustum*: 'And the first grey of morning . . .'. For this episodic beginning as a mark of epic style, *cf. Iliad*, VI., 1, 'So was the dread fray of Trojans and Achaians left to itself . . .'.

6. mistletoe. *v.* Introduction, § 7.

7. unwitting, *i.e.*, not knowing what fatal consequences would ensue.

11. Valhalla, the Hall of the Dead, where all brave warriors who had died fighting, as heroes should, were gathered around Odin, and feasted with the Gods.

14. skulls. It was a Scandinavian custom to make drinking-bowls out of skulls; since the skulls were those of enemies whom they had slain, the bowls would be regarded as trophies.

22. so bright, so loved a god. *v.* Introduction, § 6, for Balder's attractive personality. 'Balder again, the White God, the beautiful, the just and benignant (whom the early Christian missionaries found to resemble Christ) is the sun'. (*Carlyle.*)

23-4. that doom which the Nornies spun. In classical mythology the fates spin threads which represent the lives of men with all their events; the cutting of a thread means the end of that life. *v.* Introduction, § 5.

25. set seal, 'determined irrevocably'. The metaphor, of course, is drawn from the setting of a seal to a document, an act that makes final and irreversible the decision contained therein.

28. your doom, viz., at the coming of Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods; *v.* Introduction, § 9.

32. with women's tears, *i.e.*, womanish; the moral centre of the Norse mythology, according to Carlyle, was the necessity to be brave in face of an inflexible destiny; *see* the quotation in Introduction § 3. Their plan of conduct was like that of the Stoics whom Arnold so strongly admired: endurance, to be unconcerned in face of disaster, to check and repress the emotions, and to cultivate the strength of will to pursue their course of life uninfluenced by external events.

41-5. It was the Norse custom to dispose of the corpse of a heroic warrior in this way. The Vikings, of course, were famous as seamen.

47. Sleipner, a horse of great swiftness, 'said to have eight feet; but this perhaps is only a figure of speech to express his swiftness'. (G. C. Macaulay.) According to legend this horse was begotten by Lok. 'The gods wished a giant builder to build them a stronghold. As wages he demanded the sun, the moon, and the goddess Freya. The Æsir agreed, on condition that he should finish the building in a single winter, and the

agreement should be void if the stronghold were not ready by the first day of summer. The giant worked with his horse Svadilfari. There were still three days before summer began, and everything was ready except the castle gate. Then, in the god's hour of need, Loki vowed that he would cheat the giant of his wage. In the form of a mare he galloped up to the horse, the horse grew wild and ran after the mare, and the builder in pursuit. So the work was made to cease. Thor slew the giant, and Loki soon after begat a grey foal with eight feet; it was Odin's swift steed Sleipnir'. (Kauffmann, *Northern Mythology.*)

49. Lidskialf, the name of Odin's palace; *v.* Introduction, § 4.

51. his shining orbs, *i.e.*, eyes. A so-called 'Poetic Diction' has been frequently used by poets, particularly those of the eighteenth century, under the mistaken impression that they must avoid the phraseology of ordinary daily life as being too mean for poetry. Addison declared that 'since it often happens that the most obvious phrases and those which are used in ordinary conversation become too familiar to the ear and contract a kind of meanness by passing through the mouths of the vulgar, a poet should take particular care to guard himself against idiomatic ways of speaking'. So instead of birds and the moon, we have such grandiloquent phrases as 'the feathered quire [choir]' and 'refulgent lamp of night'. Wordsworth, on the other hand, protested against this strained and artificial diction, and in place of the 'gaudiness and inane phraseology' of his predecessors proposed to employ 'a selection of the language really spoken by men', believing that 'this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life'. Arnold was certainly not in agreement with Addison on this point, and his poems contain few examples of 'poetic diction' like the above. His ideal was rather plainness and directness.

53. the conjuring Lapps. Magic seems to have been cultivated extensively among the Lapps from very early times. There were many professional wizards, but any adult might consult the divining drum for himself.

54. In the winter their carrying and travelling is done on sledges drawn by reindeer.

55-6. the Finns are, like the Lapps, members of the Finno-Ugric branch of the Ural-Altaic family of races. (The other branches are the Mongols, Manchus, and Turks.) They were a quiet, peace-loving people; crimes of violence were almost unknown, and of their branch only the Magyars, or Hungarians, were at all warlike. According to western standards they were not remarkable for being 'fair men'; 'as a rule the skin is greyish or olive coloured, the eyes grey or blue, the hair light'. (Enc. Brit.)

56. who live in holes under the ground. All men in a very early stage of civilisation, viz., the Paleolithic, seem to have lived in caves. Possibly

Arnold means merely that the Lapps were cave-men in this sense; but even now 'their winter houses are partly underground'. (Enc. Brit.)

57. Ida's plain (Idarollr), the place where the sons of Borr (of whom Odin was one) built their dwelling-place.

67. the boar Serimner's flesh. The flesh of the boar was renewed every day.

68. crowned, 'filled'. The use of the word 'crowned' suggests that this was a reward. N.E.D. defines 'To fill to overflowing, or till the foam rises above the brim', and quotes Dryden, 'Two goblets will I crown with sparkling wine'.

mead, the usual beverage of the heroes; it was said to be procured from the goat Heidrun, which feeds on the foliage of a tree growing in Valhalla. In actual fact it was made by the fermentation of a mixture of honey and water.

69. pent-up, closed up so that no grief could appear. Ordinarily the term is applied to the contents rather than to the container, so that we should speak of grief being pent up or imprisoned: *cf.* the sonnet of Keats, 'To one who has been long in city pent'.

93. revolving, *sc.* 'in her mind', *i.e.*, thinking over. Frea knew all that was to happen in the world; *cf. l.* 108, 'thou knows't the fates, and things allow'd'.

105. what to attempt, an elliptical use of the infinitive, 'what am I to attempt'. *Cf. Hamlet*, III., i., 56: 'To be, or not to be: that is the question'. There is another ellipsis in *l.* 108: 'things [that are] allowed'.

109. a compact strike, arrange an agreement; this phrase is 'probably borrowed from the Latin *fœdus ferire*, to strike a compact, so called because an animal was struck and killed as a sacrifice on such occasions'. (*Webster.*)

114. A rhetorical exclamation meant to imply the absurdity of the supposition that one long fated to die should alter the course of his destiny and take the place of another person in life ('fill another's life'). Hoder is dull of understanding ('sightless in soul') as well as physically blind to think such a thing possible.

122. Despite the apparent joy and freedom from care of the Gods and heroes, the haunting expectation of the final battle breaks in upon their happiness.

124. the darkness of the final times, the Twilight of the Gods; *v.* Introduction, § 9.

130. which shall but fail, 'although the attempts are destined to fail'.

139-40. 'the ordinary way [by] which they come

141. Bifrost, the bridge that connected Midgard, the earth, with Asgard, the heaven. It probably represented the rainbow.

where is Heimdall's watch, where Heimdall is watchman or sentinel. Bifrost was evidently an important position for the defence of Asgard

against attacks from the giants. Heimdall had marvellous powers. He could see a hundred leagues, by night as well as by day; his sense of hearing was so acute that he could hear the grass grow on the ground, and the wool on the sheep's back. The sound of his horn could be heard all over heaven and earth.

148. Giall's stream. Giall was a river that formed one of the boundaries of Niflheim.

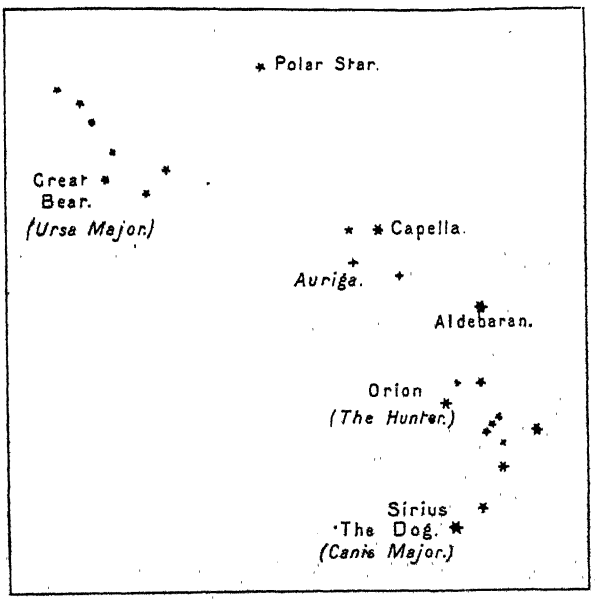
149. For **keep** as equivalent to 'guard' *cf.* Macaulay, *Horatius*:

Now who will stand on either hand
And keep the bridge with me?

The damsel was Modgudr.

151. the low shore of ghosts is, of course, identical with 'Hela's realm'.

155. the northern Bear. There are two constellations of the Bear, the Little Bear (*Ursa Minor*), which is quite close to the Polar Star, and the Great Bear (Ursa Major, also known as the Plough, or Charles' Wain). The 'northern Bear' need not necessarily mean the more northern of the two; line 157 is more appropriate to the Great Bear. The Great



Bear has its face turned towards the Dog (the constellation of Canis Major, which contains Sirius) and the Hunter (Orion). The messenger has to travel into the far north where the Bear is always to be seen.

158. and is alone not dipped in Ocean's stream, *i.e.*, does not fall below the horizon at any time so far as is seen by those who dwell north of the tropics. Mr. G. C. Macaulay points out that this is a reminiscence of Homer, *Iliad*, XVIII., 487, 'The Bear, which they also call the Wain, which turns about in the same place and watches Orion, and is alone without portion in the baths of Ocean'.

Even to the Greeks the Bear was not the only important constellation that could always be seen; Cassiopœia is about equally distant from the Pole. The inhabitants of Northern lands would always be able to see certain others further away from the Pole.

160. According to Homeric geography Ocean was a great stream which surrounded the world.

164. chink'd. The northern icefields are usually broken by huge cracks or crevasses.

172. The plains | of Níf | ˆ lheím | .

Niflheim is for purposes of scansion equivalent to Níf-el-heím.

174. **the shadowy tribes,** the tribes of shades, the ghosts.

182. if haply, to see if perhaps.

203. loathed feasts. Naturally the gods, fresh from the loss of Balder, could take no pleasure in feasting.

211. postures of runes, dispositions or arrangements of mystical signs, *i.e.*, the making or interpreting of magic spells.

Runes were the letters or symbols for sounds used in very early times by Teutonic tribes before their adoption of the characters of the Roman alphabet. The name was also applied to symbols having some mystic meaning or some magic powers attached. (Anglo-Saxon *rūn* = mystery, secret.) Writing was a mystery known but to few, and so was in the common opinion almost synonymous with magic. 'It is the greatest invention man has ever made, this of marking down the unseen thought that is in him by written characters. It is a kind of second speech, almost as miraculous as the first'. (Carlyle.)

Professor Wyld suggests an alternative reason for the use of *rune* to signify a letter of the alphabet, viz., 'that the characters were chiefly employed for magic purposes'. [Two of the early Teutonic runes were retained in the new Roman alphabet adopted, through the Irish, by the Old English. These were ƿ (wen) = *w*, and þ (thorn) = *th*.]

215. bespake him, archaic for 'spoke to him'; *cf.* Shakespeare, *Richard II.*, v., ii., 20: 'Whilst he bespake them thus'. The modern meaning is 'to speak for beforehand', hence 'to order'; *cf.* *Twelfth Night*, III., iii., 40: 'I will bespeak our diet'.

221. Hermod, one of the sons of Odin; in II., 264, Balder calls him 'Hermod the nimble'.

224. built him, dative of advantage (= 'for himself'), or ethic dative (dat. of person interested). *Cf. King John* IV., i., 1: 'Heat me these irons hot'. *Hamlet*, II., i., 7: 'Enquire me first what Danskers are in Paris'. *See* II., 264.

232. starts him, that he thinks . . ., 'startles him, or makes him start, so that he thinks . . . '.

238. This refers to Frea's promise 'I will be his guide unseen'. (*l.* 191.)

239. Arnold also uses *soft* for *softly* in III., 30.

252-67. Does this passage help to develop the action in any way?

268. Breidablik, Balder's home.

271. Scalds, bards. An Icelandic word for the Court poet.

275. dirge. An anthem in the old Church service for the dead began 'Dirige, Domine, Deus meus in conspectu tuo meam vitam'. The first word, contracted to *dirge*, was used as a name for the whole; hence its more general sense of a lament or song of mourning.

Similarly, *Requiem* is the first word of the hymn 'Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine' ('Give them eternal rest, O Lord'), sung to ask peace for the souls of the dead.

276. Satisfied with wail. Mr. G. C. Macaulay quotes Homer, *Od.*, XIX., 213: 'When she was satisfied with tearful wail', etc. He also points out that the visit of Balder's spirit to Nanna and its disappearance like smoke was probably suggested by *Iliad*, XXIII., 65 *et seq.*, where the shade of Patrochus appears to Achilles.

279. seal'd her tired eyes with sleep. Sealed = closed, as with a seal. *Cf.* Shakespeare, *Henry IV.*, pt. ii., III., i., 19:

> Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
> Seal up the ship-boy's eyes?

There is also a term *seel*, in falconry, meaning to sew up the eyelids of a hawk with thread. *Cf. Anthony and Cleopatra*, III., xiii., 112: 'The wise gods seel our eyes'; and *Othello*, I., iii., 270: 'to seel her father's eyes'.

288. lamb, a term of endearment, following naturally from the secondary meaning 'one who is weak and gentle as a lamb'.

303. thy thread of life, *v.* note to *l.* 23.

304. thy corpse and thee are in antithesis. Nanna will not be burned alive; her soul will have fled, and it will be only her dead body that is placed on the pyre beside his.

313. right bars this. This must mean 'this course is prohibited by eternal law'; 'right' can hardly bear its ethical meaning.

317. whom . . . presides, usually 'over whom . . . presides'. This transitive use is rare; N.E.D. quotes Carlyle, *French Revolution*, I., iii., 3: 'He sits there, presiding that Bureau of his',

II
JOURNEY TO THE DEAD

2. *Cf.* the classical myth according to which the god personifying the sun (Helios, later identified with Apollo) drove through the heavens from the East into the West in a chariot drawn by four horses.

4. The golden-crested cock. His name was *Gullinkambi*, golden-comb.

5-7. *i.e.*, at the Twilight of the Gods.

14-18. *v.* Introduction, § 3.

19. The Valkyries were female warriors who lived about Frea as the Heroes did about Odin. They descended to the earth and, in the battles of men, picked out those who were worthy of the high honour of a warrior's death, and conveyed them to Valhalla. The heroes then feasted in the hall of Odin, and spent their days in their beloved pastime of fighting.

21. Skulda, who represented the future (and was therefore 'the youngest of the Nornies'), rode with the Valkyries to direct their choice.

22-3. *See* I., 140-1.

28. glad, archaic for 'gladden, make glad'. *Cf. Sohrab*, 536. N.E.D. cites Spenser, Bunyan, Smollet, Byron, and Morris. It is possibly used here to make the metre syllabically regular; this, however, is not necessary, as an additional unstressed syllable could be introduced without violation of rhythm.

30. tilt-yard. The use of this term for an age before that of chivalry is an anachronism. *See* Glossary.

33. Igdrasil, *see* Introduction, § 2.

36. Gladheim, literally 'world of gladness', the golden Hall of the Gods and Court of Odin.

49. Thor is always represented as armed with a hammer, which as its Norse name, *mjolnir*, indicates, represents the lightning or thunderbolt.

which the giants know, a conventional phrase taken *verbatim* from the *Edda*; the Giants know it because they, or their comrades, had felt it in battle.

56. lichen-bearded. Expand this metaphor. Lichen is a plant without flower growing like a fungus on rocks or the trunks of trees.

60. to draw = for them to draw; a gerundial use of the infinitive, to express purpose.

63. darkling, here = 'dark'; usually 'in the dark', as in *Lear*, I., iv., 237: 'So out went the candle and we were left darkling'. (*Cf.* also Keats, *Nightingale*, 'Darkling I listen'.) Arnold uses the word as equivalent to 'dark' in *Dover Beach*, 'as on a darkling plain'.

88. strait, narrow; one of the many deliberate archaisms.

89. walling rocks, rocks that stand up like walls.

91-9. This is a simile that is elaborated, for the sake of pictorial effect, beyond what is necessary for mere elucidation; in fact the resemblance is of the very slightest.

98. steam. The moisture of their breath is condensed in the cold air into a mass of minute particles of water. A phenomenon that will be unfamiliar to most Indian students.

102-3. The bridge would not usually rumble and shake when crossed only by ghosts.

122. ta'en for 'taken' is common in several dialects; but is probably used here in order to make a monosyllable of 'takes', and so to keep the normal number of syllables in the line; but this is not necessary, for the presence of two unstressed syllables in a foot need not extend the time length and make the metre irregular.

125. This use of *nor* without a correlative is not to be imitated.

126. vapour-blotted, obscured by mist.

127. Which hangs | ˄ 6 | ver the iće | .

Notice how this scansion, taking account of the pause after 'hangs', gives additional weight to that important word. The idea of hanging is accentuated by the lingering movement of the first two feet.

129. ridging, the ripples or waves from ridges as they freeze. The noting of such a detail as this adds both reality and picturesqueness to a description.

133. there was Balder bound. Since 'bound' = 'going', the adverb should strictly be 'thither'. For *bound*, *see* Glossary.

136 *et seq.* Notice the frequency of verbal repetition in the following passage; *cf.* I., 159, *et seq.*

165. ungraven shields. They had as yet done no great deeds, so their shields were left plain and unadorned. *Cf.* Tennyson, *Gareth and Lynette*:

> When some good knight had done one noble deed
> His arms were carven only; but if twain
> His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,
> The shield was blank and bare without a sign . . .

166. their star Betray'd them, fortune betrayed them in that they could not die fighting, although they had led warlike lives. Traces of the old astrological belief in the influence of the stars on human destiny still remain in such phrases as 'he was born under a lucky star'. *Cf. Sohrab*, 781 and note.

172. sloughs, bogs. This was an old German custom, and, according to Tacitus, weaklings received the same treatment as cowards. [*Germania*, 12: 'ignavos et imbelles et corpore infames cœno ac palude iniecta insuper crate mergunt'. (Quoted by Mr. Macaulay.)]

173. wattled hurdles; a redundancy, for 'hurdle' in this sense means the same as 'wattle'. A wattle was made by interweaving willows or reeds.

187. clasped her knees, a sign of suppliance.

188. mild = mildly, in mild words. *Cf.* I., 239, where 'soft' is used for 'softly.'

206. There were two traditions with regard to the birth of the monsters: one that they were borne to Lok by Angrbotha, the other that Lok himself brought them forth 'because he had eaten of the heart of an evil woman'.

210. 'In spite of you hath grown and flourished'. For **amain** (= 'with full power'), *see* Glossary.

211. The serpent, Midgardsworm, grew to such an extent that as he lay in the stream of ocean surrounding the world he held his tail in his mouth, and so formed a ring.

215. the bored crag. The chain was passed through a hole bored in a huge rock, and the rock was then buried deep in the earth.

216. limber, 'flexible, pliant, supple, easily bent (without damage to shape or structure)'. Fenris could not be bound with chains of iron but only by a magic chain which was like silk to the touch.

220. *See* Introduction, § 8.

224. Muspel was the land of fire in the south whence at the Twilight of the Gods would advance the allies of Lok led by Surtr with his flaming sword, to destroy the world by fire. *Cf.* III., 262, 'the flaming world', also 475 and 480.

bourne, destination or goal; primarily 'boundary' or 'limit', hence the idea of the end or aim of a journey.

235. 'If even one thing fails to grieve, then Balder shall stop here'.

245. withheld, forbidden; rarely used impersonally in this way.

264. the nimble; *cf.* I., 221, 'the first of all the gods | For speed . . . Most fleet he was'.

gild me not my death, 'I beg you, don't try to make my death seem better than it is'. **Gild,** literally, to cover with a thin layer of gold; hence, metaphorically, to give a finer superficial appearance. For the ethic dative, **me,** *cf.* I., 224, note.

265-7. The reverse was Satan's opinion in *Paradise Lost,* 'Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven'. Mr. Macaulay compares Homer, *Odyssey,* XI., 487 *et seq.*, where Achilles says: 'Console me not for death, illustrious Odysseus; I would rather be a labourer and serve another, and he a man with small estate, who had not much living, than rule over all the spirits of the dead who have perished'.

265. serf, loosely for 'one in a condition of servitude'. Strictly serfdom was in the Middle Ages a modified form of slavery, the duties and services of a serf to his lord being in the main fixed by custom. In contrast with the ancient slave, the serf, although attached to the soil and personally dependent on his lord, was not in complete subjection. [The *Dialogus de Scaccario* states explicitly that the lords own the bodies of the villeins (*see* Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England*); but legal theory is not at one with custom and tradition on this point, the latter laying stress on attachment to the land.]

303. as wing'd, 'as if winged'.

307. held, 'occupied'.

III
FUNERAL

6-19. A typical example of the elaborated simile. Lines 10 to 16 are not strictly relevant to the comparison, but are introduced apparently for the sake of the pathetic and vivid picture they give. There is a slight anachronism involved in making Lok, in such a primitive age, compare anything to a farmer going to a crowded market town; and the comparison itself is hardly exact, for Hermod was not, as was the farmer, followed when he originally set out on his journey. Dr. Johnson might have complained that this simile does not ennoble its subject or display it to the fancy with greater dignity; but, although it is not of the elevating type, its tone is admirably adapted to express the mockery of Lok.

14. a-tremble, 'trembling'. *See* Glossary.

21. Lok, despite his character and his offspring, was said to possess considerable physical beauty.

29. Before the destined day, and so contrary to the disposition of fate. For fate as a power above that of the Gods; *see* Introduction, § 5.

30. For soft instead of 'softly', *cf.* I., 239.

49. keep, 'hold good'.

55. To indulge much in grief was not in accord with the fatalism of the warrior gods. Their destiny was fixed, so that it was of no use to grieve over it.

72. thy hammer, *i.e.*, the thunderbolt, or lightning.

in thy chariot drawn: Thor seems usually to have gone on foot; *cf.* III., 218.

73. swaying, literally, as here, swinging or inclining to one side; hence the common meaning of ruling over.

83 *et seq.* *Cf.* Introduction, § 6, for Balder's distinctive character.

90. Freya is here distinguished as the goddess of love and beauty; her husband was Oder. Probably in origin she was identical with Frea, as Oder was with Odin. The story of her husband is sufficiently indicated in the following verses; but infidelity is, by tradition, more commonly attributed to Freya than to Oder.

96. Vanadis, because her father, Niord, was one of the Vanir, a race characterised by wisdom and knowledge of magic, and recognised after a struggle by the Æsir as divine, though not as having the same degree of divinity. For Niord, *see* III., 326, note.

126. Ragnar Lodbrok, a celebrated Danish chief. In one of his piratical raids on the English coast he was captured by Ælla, the Northumbrian king, the beginning of whose reign is fixed at 863. Ragnar was said to have been done to death by serpents introduced into his prison.

128. Living, 'while he was alive'; notice the emphatic position.

129. vast, here vividly used as a substantive, 'vast extent'; *cf. Winter's Tale*, I., i., 32: 'shook hands, as over a vast'. For an even bolder use *cf. Hamlet*, I., ii., 197: 'the dead vast and middle of the night'.

137 *et seq.* *See* Introduction, § 6.

148. Thora, his first wife.

Gothland, an island in the Baltic Sea.

149. Aslauga, daughter of a Norse chief, who, when living as a peasant girl, was wooed by Ragnar.

163. the highest top, a pleonasm, the meaning of one word being contained in that of the other.

179. the water gurgled in: coherence is not preserved here; water did not enter the ship.

200-5. This simile was omitted in later editions; *l.* 206 being changed to 'And long, in the far dark, blazed Balder's pile', and 'burn'd' in *l.* 207 to 'flared'. Possibly Arnold realised the danger of overburdening his poem with similes.

228. that world-shadowing tree; the ash Igdrasil (*see* Introduction, § 2) covered the whole world with its branches.

232. both have grounds, there are good reasons for the consideration of either course, acceptance or rejection of the terms.

261. At the beginning of all things was chaos; there was neither Midgard nor Asgard. Ymir, a gigantic son of Chaos, was slain by Odin, Vili, and Ve, the sons of Bor (whose father was licked out of a rock by a cow). The flesh of Ymir made the earth, his hair the trees, his bones the rocky hills, his blood the rivers and the sea; 'of his eye-brows they formed Asgard, their Gods'-Dwelling; his skull was the great blue vault of Immensity, and the brains of it became the Clouds'. Both Ymir and the above-mentioned cow were, according to the younger *Edda*, formed from the drippings of melting ice.

268. *See* note on II., 224.

272. The Earth was an outpost of the Gods against the Giants.

276. the field of pirates. It is in the field that the farmer by tilling makes his living; so the sea where the pirate finds his livelihood is called his field. Metaphors of this kind, *Kennings*, are frequent in old Teutonic poetry, especially in connection with the sea. *Cf.* also 'the whale-road', 'the swan-path', 'the battle of the waves'.

284. a queen, 'as a queen'.

307. if haply, 'to see if perhaps'.

313. And as in winter, etc. 'Since Balder represents the summer sun or the warmth of summer, this simile is peculiarly appropriate, indeed one is tempted to think that this part of the myth must have referred originally to the dripping thaw after the winter's frost, which seems to promise a return of summer, though the fulfilment of the promise is often long deferred'. (G. C. Macaulay.)

318. dibbled. A dibble is a pointed stick with which holes are made in garden soil for the planting of seeds, seedlings, or bulbs. Hence a verb may be formed meaning 'to make a hole as with a dibble'.

326. Niord, or Niorthr, was one of the Vanir who was received as a God by the Æsir, being held as a hostage after the war between the Æsir and the Vanir. He ruled the winds and the sea. He was the father of Frea the goddess of love. (For the Vanir *see* note to III., 96.)

330. Vanheim, the world of the Vanir.

340. gibes, 'taunts, flouts', usually 'gibes at'. The transitive use is rare in modern English.

343. good lack, an expression of surprise; *cf.* also *Tristram and Iseult*, I., 125. *lack* = *alack*, which is not a corruption of 'alas', but *a*, ah + *lak*, failure, fault, shame; hence used in 'crying out upon a thing' in reprobation; hence an expression of regret, and finally of surprise. (N.E.D.) *good*, used analogously with 'good Lord'.

345. sprite = 'spirit', not necessarily of the vivacious, elf-like type suggested by the modern usage of this word.

346. boor, countryman, farmer; *see* Glossary.

348. stoops her head, bends down or lowers; *cf. Richard II.*, III., i., 19, 'have stoop'd my neck'. This transitive usage is now obsolete.

374. the Gods' cross, a figurative use derived from the particular cross on which Christ died; 'something that has to be borne, a trial or affliction'. *Cf.* the title of Penn's book, *No Cross, No Crown.* Or more generally, 'something that crosses or thwarts; a misfortune'.

404. not daily to endure . . ., in apposition with *this*; 'in order that I might not daily have to endure . . . '.

407. lost the light. Since Hoder was blind this is hardly an appropriate locution.

414. have any cause, 'if any have cause'.

418. fellow-sport of Lok. 'Sport' = something that is played with. They had both been made sport of by Lok.

447. leaden, because it was heavy and had sunk to the ground. This meaning is of course metaphorical in origin; 'like lead' in its main characteristic, viz., weight. But, as in many instances, by frequent use the metaphor has become dead, and the word is used as if its literal meaning were 'heavy'.

457. Forset was to be champion of justice, both between men and between gods.

476. function, *i.e.*, a definite work to do.

480. the final day, Ragnarok.

481. the fiery land, 'Muspel's children', because they come from the land of fire; *cf.* III., 262-3, 'from the flaming world . . . thou sent'st and fetched'st fire'.

482-3. *See* Introduction, § 9.

485. the great serpent, Midgardsworm; *cf.* Introduction, § 8.

498. Vidar, a son of Odin with great strength, remarkable for his silence. He is chiefly important at the time of the fall of the Gods; he survives and avenges Odin, and succeeds to his rule in the second Asgard. This probably symbolises the restoration of peace and justice; Vidar had been silent and retired during the age of injustice. He is often identified with Heimdall.

Tyr = Tiw, the great war-god whose name is preserved in Tuesday.

502. the golden-crested cock, *cf.* II., 4.

504. The 'spears' are javelins, which 'pour' as rain would, *i.e.*, thickly.

507. it were, 'it would be'.

509. I am long since, *cf.* the Latin and French constructions with the present tense.

513. the arrowy hail, the arrows that fall thick as a hail.

519 *et seq.* For **the second Asgard,** *see* Introduction, § 9, and note on III., 492.

536. a seed of man preserved. The race of mankind had been destroyed, yet two men, Lif and Lifthrasir, survived, sheltered in the branches of a great tree, and from them a new race was to spring.

541. fill = 'satisfy'.

562. fain had he, 'gladly would he', as in *Sohrab*, 88, 'Fain would I know thee safe'. 'Fain' is an adverb that is now only used in deliberately flowery or archaic language. The use of 'had' for 'would' is obsolete.

568. Coasts that keep the sun, coasts where the sun always shines. 'Keep' = 'retain'; the phrase is probably analogous with such phrases as 'keep the house', 'keep one's bed'.

GLOSSARY

Abbreviations:

Fr.	French.
Lat.	Latin.
M.E.	Middle English.
Mod. E. . . .	Modern English.
N.E.D. . . .	New English Dictionary.
O.E.	Old English or Anglo-Saxon.

Ablaze (III., 249), 'blazing'. The particle *a-* is used to mean *in* before words denoting some state, such as *a live*, *a sleep*. 'In these the word governed by *a* was originally a noun, *e.g.*, *life*, *sleep*, but being often the verbal substantive of state or act, it has been in modern times erroneously taken as a verb and used as a model for forming such adverbial phrases from any verb, as *a-blaze*, *a-tremble*'. (N.E.D.)

against (I., 225), 'near to'. O.E. *ongeán* + adverbial suffix *-es* + later excrescent *-t* by analogy with *whilst*, *amongst*.

amain (II., 210), 'with full power, exceedingly'. From O.E. *mægen*, strength (from the same root as the adjective *main* meaning 'chief'). The word is one of late formation on the model of such words as *aground*, *afoot*, where the prefix *a-*, meaning 'in' or 'with', is from O.E. *on*.

antler'd (I., 54), having antlers or large branching horns.

attend (III., 516), 'await' as in *Othello*, III., iii., 282, 'the generous islanders . . . do attend your presence'. Now rarely used in this precise sense.

a-tremble (III., 14), 'trembling'. For the formation *cf. ablaze*.

bale (I., 95), 'woe, evil'; from O.E. *bealu* by simplification of diphthong.

beweep (II., 238), 'weep for'.

boor (III., 346), probably from the Low German or Dutch word meaning farmer, countryman, or peasant, connected with the O.E. *gebûr* of the same meaning; hence the connotation of the modern word includes the idea of roughness, ill-breeding, or lack of refinement and delicacy. It is cognate with the latter part of *neighbour*, one who dwells near.

bound (II., 133, and III., 563), preparing to go, directing one's course'. Formed from M.E. *boun*, 'ready to go', as in Chaucer, 'She was boun to go'. N.E.D. suggests that the excrescent *-d* 'may be due in part to its being regarded as a perfect participle of the derived verb *Boun*, and in part to confusion with *Bound* = obliged'.

bourne (II., 224); *see* note.

brood (III., 247), 'race'; literally the whole number of young birds produced at one birth.

bucklers (III., 504), small shields.

corslet (III., 64), a piece of armour to protect the body; from Fr. *cors*, body.

crofts (II., 300), small pieces of enclosed ground; usually, as here, applied only to arable land.

disfeatured (II., 171), 'disfigured, with faces mangled or distorted'.

distraught (I., 249), = 'distracted', *i.e.*, 'agitated so deeply as almost to be mad'. This form was probably formed by false analogy with such participles as *caught* and *taught*, which are, however, from Teutonic roots.

donned (II., 11), 'put on'; don = do + on, doff = do + off.

erst (I., 36, III., 62), an archaism, here = 'before'; strictly, 'at first', from O.E. *ǣrest*, superlative of *ǣr*, soon (*cf.* Mod. E., *ere*).

fain (III., 561), 'gladly', as in 'He would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat'. *Cf. Sohrab*, *l.* 88.

fare (I., 165), 'travel'; O.E. *fāran*, to make a journey.

fetlock (II., 25), the first joint below the knee of a horse, covered behind with a tuft of hair.

frith (III., 332), an inlet of the sea; a variant by metathesis (*i.e.* change in the position of sounds) of *firth*, as in *the Firth of Forth*. *Cf. three* and *thirteen*, dialectic *ax* (= *aks*) for *ask*.

gall (II., 221), strictly a bitter liquid secreted by the liver, hence 'poison'. There was an ancient belief that the venom of serpents was formed from their gall.

gully (I., 81), a ravine.

haled (II., 58), 'dragged'; obsolete.

hard on (I., 280), 'close upon', *i.e.*, very near; *cf. hard by*.

hest (I., 241), archaic for behest or command.

hinds (II., 95), originally = servants in general, but more often, as here, in particular = farm labourers.

kine (II., 92), 'cattle'. A double plural: the plural of O.E. *cū* (cow) was formed by vowel modification (umlaut or mutation), *cȳ*; and the plural termination *-n* (as in *oxen*) was added in the Middle English period. *Kine* is now only used poetically for *cows*. Similarly the double plural *brethren* has given way before *brothers*. *Children*, however, is still the standard form, while *childer*, the single plural, only survives in dialect.

main (I., 86), the open sea.

marge (I., 161), pseudo-archaism for 'margin,' *i.e.*, shore.

messes (I., 67), dishes of prepared food; later used of a number of people taking meals together.

nether (II., 212), 'lower'.

otherwhile (II., 29), 'at other times, previously'.

portion (I., 33), 'lot, fate'; so *portioned*, etc., I., 114, = 'fated to die'.

pyre (I., 60), a heap of wood used to burn a corpse.

spits (III., 327), narrow pieces of land extending from the shore into the sea.

sprite (III., 345), 'spirit'.

squeamish (III., 350), 'scrupulously fastidious'. A word of Scandinavian origin, connected with M.E. *sweem*, meaning dizziness or swoon ('swimming in the head'); in some intermediate stage it probably meant fainting because of disgust, and so 'over-fastidious'. Possibly confused with *qualm*.

thrall (III., 551), one in a position of bondage, partial or complete.

tilt-yard (II., 30). The word *tilt* is from M.E. *tylten*, 'to totter'; hence 'to cause to totter', *i.e.*, 'to overthrow', frequently with specialised reference in the Middle Ages to an encounter between mounted men armed with lances, the object of each being to unseat his opponent. *Yard* (O.E. *geard*) = an enclosed space.

wend (I., 121), to go, is now rarely used except in the preterite *went* to serve for the preterite tense of *go*, and in the poetic phrase 'to wend one's way'. The reflexive use as here is near to the O.E. intransitive verb meaning 'to turn oneself', hence 'to go'.

yore (III., 545), in the phrase *of yore* = 'formerly, long ago'. From O.E. *geara*, gen. pl. of *geār*, a year, 'so that the sense was "of years", *i.e.*, in years past; the genitive case being often used to express the *time when*, as in *dæges*, by day . . . with the usual change of O.E. ā to M.E. ō, as in *stān*; stone'. (Skeat.)

GARDEN CITY PRESS LIMITED, PRINTERS, LETCHWORTH.